

HONG KONG

October-November

expat

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Blenheim Bed
with 6 Drawers

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Adam Chair

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Eva Chair

Jardin Exo'chic - Bougainvillier

Adam Chair

Canopy - Turquoise

Eva Chair

Alexandria - Amethyst

Adam Chair

Mariposa - Perroquet

Adam Chair

Manaos - Perroquet

- Flagship Designer Showroom: 1/F, Horizon Plaza, Ap Lei Chau. 2877 3295

- Studio by Tequila Kola: 34 Elgin Street, SoHo. 2520 1611 (near escalator)

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Stacey Armchair
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Stacey Armchair
Cherry - Chance



Stacey Armchair
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year-round big animals

Yap established the world's first government backed big animal sanctuary protecting resident manta ray and reef shark populations.

Yap State created the world's first government-backed manta ray sanctuary in 2008 - the rays and their habitat are forever protected. Yap is home to hundreds of resident manta rays and due to the numbers and consistency of sightings, the island's lagoons are a field research site for Manta Trust.

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We offer a full range of island tours specifically designed to showcase Yap's unique indigenous culture and unspoiled natural beauty.



EDITOR'S NOTE

Most of us say that we love to travel, but don't you think it depends on what kind of travel it is?

There are the enjoyable trips – the ones that involve a short flight to a beach resort, for example, or a cultural enclave. But then there are the “visiting the family” trips; these ones often come with long flights one way or the other, and can involve trying to fit back into the structures or issues of an earlier life. There are business trips too, of course; they can go either way really, depending on what's waiting for you at the other end!

I hadn't been back to the UK in three years and I found the flight on this recent holiday really long and uncomfortable. My friend flew a few days before me, from the UK all the way to New Zealand, so I shouldn't complain. At the end of the trip he sent me this by email, and it made me laugh, so I thought I'd share it!

“First flight wasn't too bad, seemed to go quickly. Managed to get two movies in. Second flight had little Jonny (3) next to me and he brought his game console with him. At sleep time, Jonny Senior decided to lie him down, hence not-so-little Jonny's feet ended up across my lap... After a few pushbacks, Jonny Senior decided to turn him round. I dozed off for a bit only to wake up with little Jonny's head on my lap. Jonny Senior had lifted the arm-rest between him and me. Anyway, order was restored when I accidentally brought the arm-rest down, in my sleep of course, on little Jonny. Jonny Senior eventually worked out that he wasn't going to fit and made him sit up...”

Having flown with young children regularly and often on my own, I can empathise with those in similar situations, but I'm still amazed how many people don't even attempt to keep their children quiet – especially slightly older ones who should be able to take some form of instruction. Maybe I'm just becoming old and grumpy!

Speaking of travel, this month we're featuring more fantastic destinations, from the very near (Macau) to the further afield (Micronesia). Enjoy the journey and then start planning your next real one. And remember to let us know about any great finds, whether it's a resort island or somewhere off the beaten track – we'd love to hear from you on Facebook, or email us at editor@expatliving.hk.



Rebecca

REBECCA BISSET
Editor-in-Chief

We want you!

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Read the latest Hong Kong happenings

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Having a party or a promotional launch and want to get the word out about it on our website? Just head to www.expatliving.hk, click on “Post an event”, and fill in the details. We'll do the rest!

WHERE TO BUY

A list of retail outlets where you can buy the latest copy of *Expat Living*

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY!

THROUGHOUT OCTOBER Breast Cancer Awareness Month, hkbcf.org

8-11 OCTOBER 7th Edition of the Asia Contemporary Art Show, Conrad Hotel, asiacontemporaryart.com

9-10 OCTOBER Beertopia at Central Harbourfront, beertopiahk.com

9-11 OCTOBER Hong Kong Classic at the Central Harbourfront, hkclassiccars.com/

10-11 OCTOBER Vienna Boys Choir at City Hall, vbcma.com

10-18 OCTOBER Hong Kong Tennis Open at Victoria Park, cityline.com

22-25 OCTOBER Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival at the Central Harbourfront, discoverhongkong.com

31 OCTOBER Michaelmas Fair at St John's Cathedral, stjohnscathedral.org.hk

1-7 NOVEMBER Hong Kong Art Gallery Week, hk-agfa.org

1-7 NOVEMBER Standard Chartered Arts in the Park at Victoria Park, hkyaf.com

9 NOVEMBER The Gift & Lifestyle Fair at the Conrad Hotel, prestigefairs.hk

13 NOVEMBER AWA Charity Bazaar at PMQ, awa.org.hk

25 NOVEMBER The Pre-Christmas Gift Parade at the Conrad Hotel, prestigefairs.hk

27-29 NOVEMBER Clockenflap at West Kowloon Waterfront Promenade, clockenflap.com



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287 lockhart rd 2923 5090 / 193 lockhart rd 2156 0388 / 2/f 1a electric st/star st 3102 0808 /
1/f 3-11 wing fung st 3102 3189 / 664 shanghai st 2394 4411 / www.duravit.com

expat LIVING

Editor-in-Chief
REBECCA BISSET

Group Editor
SHAMUS SILLAR

Editor
BROOKE CHENOWETH

Online Editor
SARAH RICHARD

Client Services & Production

LEANDA RATHMELL | LIANA TALIB | NUR HANANI KAMAL LUDDIN

Graphic Designers

MICHAEL BERNABE | BEATRICE NG | JEANNE WONG

Circulation
ANNA TSERLINGAS

Subscription & Administration

VALMAI DHIR | GRACE BANTARAN

Regional Business Development
KATIE PEACE

Sales & Marketing
KATE WOODBURY | WENDY CHAN

Partnerships & Events Manager
NATALIE WHITTELL

Marketing & Business Development Executive
VEENA GILL

Chief Operations Officer
COLIN PURCHASE

HR
JULIET KEYS

Contributors

AMY GREENBURG | ELLEN LOBLER
JEANNE MACK | EMILY MCCABE | KARL WOODBURY

Contributing Photographers

HELEN JENKINS (HELENJENKINSPHOTOGRAPHY.COM)
SUZANNE GOODWIN

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LENG FUNG PRINTING LTD
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CONTACT US

General Enquiries

+852 3480 7614 | +65 6259 0058
info@expatliving.hk

Advertising Sales

advertising@expatliving.hk

Subscription

+65 6812 1783 | subscription@expatliving.hk

Production

+65 6812 1787 | production@expatliving.hk

Editorial & Media Releases

editor@expatliving.hk

Calendar of Events

calendar@expatliving.hk

Events

info@expatliving.hk

Expat Living Hong Kong

info@expatliving.hk | sales@expatliving.hk
subscription@expatliving.hk

Websites

expatliving.sg | expatliving.hk | exmag.sg

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RIMBA RHYME HOME

501 horizon plaza
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apleichau hong kong
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★ **Showcase Features:** Each issue, our **home showcase features** provide a through-the-keyhole look into some of our readers' lifestyles and their interior design decisions. If you'd like us to profile your own home – whether it's beautiful, quirky, historic or modern – and you're willing to be interviewed and photographed, drop us a line at info@expatliving.hk.



SOLE AGENT

Cape Mansions

56-62 Mount Davis Road, Pokfulam, Hong Kong
Property ID: L13128019

WELCOME BACK

With everyone returned to Hong Kong, back to work, back to school, we're facing the run up to Christmas with plenty of revived energy gained from our summer breaks. As the hot weather warnings are now behind us, it's time to look towards the best season of the year. It's the perfect time to assess your household needs and consider making the move to a new home. Upsizing or downsizing, don't hesitate to contact us. We are only a phone call away. Let us take care of you.

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WHAT'S NEW

Hot products, events, ideas & more



Meaningful Giving

Despite the strong growth of the Cambodian economy, 40 percent of its people live on less than \$2.30 per day, according to the World Bank. Hong Kong-based **Hinrich Foundation's Export Assistance Program Cambodia**

helps provide meaningful work for disadvantaged Cambodians, offering steady employment for disabled people eager to provide for themselves and families. The results are handmade, eco-friendly gifts and fashion items including bags, purses, wallets, iPad and iPhone cases, yoga mats and Christmas ornaments. They're all now available to Hong Kong shoppers, thanks to the Hinrich Foundation. Visit the annual **Prestige Christmas Fairs** (Conrad Hong Kong: 9 and 25 November, 1 and 14 December) and support this very worthy cause. hinrichfoundation.com

DIGITISE ME!

Do you have a collection of old films, archive photos and family videos that are gathering dust? Did you know they can be converted to digital format so you can view them any time on your computer, TV or tablet, and share them with other family members? **Caroline B Personal Management**

offers just this service, which they carry out in-house at their Sheung Wan office – to give clients peace of mind that their personal data won't leave the Caroline B office and will only be worked on by Caroline B technicians.

Special offer: *Expat Living* readers can enjoy a 20 percent discount on technical services in October and November. **3563 7853 | caroline-b.hk** ▼



SET SAIL

This November, the city will welcome sailing teams from all over the world as the **Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club** hosts the **Etchells' World Championships** – the highlight of the sailing calendar for many enthusiasts. The event kicks off with the Asia Pacific Championships on 24 October, followed by the World Championships from November 1 to 7. This year, the boats will race on a dynamic open-water course near the Nine Pins group of islands, off the coast of Clearwater Bay, and it's set to be a great event for sailors and spectators alike. rhyc.org.hk | etchells.org ▲

HAPPY EXPATS

InterNations, the global network for those living abroad, recently conducted its *Expat Insider* survey, questioning over 14,000 respondents from 195 countries about their experiences as expats. They were quizzed on such topics as quality of life, ease of settling in, cost of living and family life. Based on the data collected, the top ten countries to live in as an expat are Mexico, Malta, Singapore, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Thailand, Panama, Canada, and Australia – with **Ecuador** coming out on top. Our beloved Hong Kong was ranked at 26. internations.org/expat-insider ▼



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COMMUNITY NEWS



THINK PINK

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and **Sai Kung's Pink Ladies** are hosting a **Ladies Long Lunch** at Jaspas on Friday, 9 October, from 12 noon until 3pm. Jaspas will feature a summer-inspired three-course set menu for \$500, including unlimited Prosecco, with proceeds to support breast cancer research. Adding a touch of colour to the day, the dress code for lunch-goers is "A Splash of Pink". The aim is not only to raise money for breast cancer research, but also to raise awareness for life-saving early detection. Seats are limited; for bookings, contact skpinkladies@yahoo.com. ▲



HELP FOR HELPERS

Every day our helpers help us to get on with our lives, while they put their own on hold. An overwhelming majority of the 330,000 migrant domestic helpers living in Hong Kong are mothers who have left their own children behind to raise someone else's. **Filmmakers Joanna Bowers and Tony Verb** are working on a documentary, *The Helper*, that will pay tribute to these women and document the struggles they face. Featuring the individual stories of the women who sing in the Hong Kong domestic helpers' choir, The Unsung Heroes, the film will follow these women as they prepare to leave their homes to travel to Hong Kong, as well as documenting the choir as they rehearse for their performance at the city's largest music and arts festival **Clockenflap**, this November. To show your support, visit thehelperdocumentary.com. ▲

SPIRIT OF THE SEASON

Kicking off the festive season with a night of carols and surprise performances, the second annual **Fayre of St John's** will be held this year on 24 November at St John's Cathedral. There will also be an after-party for guests, and the line-up of attendees is likely to include local celebrities and socialites. Again, funds raised will be donated to Maggie's Cancer Caring Centre, and the event organisers hope to raise over HK\$3 million this year. Tickets start at HK\$2,500 for a memorable night of entertainment in the name of charity. maggiescentre.org.hk quintessentiallyfoundation.org ▼



VOLUNTEER WITH THE RDA

Horse riding is widely recognised as a highly beneficial form of therapy for individuals with disabilities. It can build confidence, and improve concentration, balance, coordination and self-discipline. **Riding for the Disabled Association Hong Kong** (RDA) aims to provide free therapeutic riding lessons for children and young adults with disabilities. RDA now owns 20 horses and ponies and runs over 28 lessons weekly from Tuesdays to Saturdays in their two centres; they're the only organisation here to offer this valuable service. To continue the great work, RDA is always in need of volunteers to assist during lessons. Every volunteer receives training before starting, so there's no need to have any prior experience with horses or with children with disabilities. rda.org.hk | info@rda.org.hk ▼





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Home & Property

WHAT'S NEW

Eye-catching designs & inspiring ideas



ONLINE SHOPPING

Fans of **Indigo Living** have two reasons to celebrate this month, with the launch of the company's new autumn/winter collection, and its amazing new website. You can now shop for furniture and accessories without leaving home, with an easy-to-use website that offers browsing by product, collection, room, price or brand. The stunning new ranges are typically Indigo, with inspiring themes such as Back to Black, Arabian Nights, Club Class, Serene Chic and Scandi Style. Whether you're shopping online or in-store, you'll find lots of exciting options.

6/F, Horizon Plaza, 2 Lee Wing Street, Ap Lei Chau. indigoliving.com ▲



GIFTS FROM LIFT

Known for its European-inspired outdoor furniture, **Lift Lifestyle** also stocks a wide range of unique home décor, from hand-painted ceramics and hand-crafted silverware to mirrors and lanterns, at very reasonable prices. This festival season you'll find them at the Handmade HK Discovery Bay Market (11 October, 8, 29 November, 13 December) and the Conrad Fairs (9 November, 1, 14 December). Unit B, 2/F, Cheung Hing Industrial Building, 12P Smithfield, Kennedy Town. **3907 0386 | liftlifestyle.com** ▲

FUSION FURNITURE

New from **Oriental Home**, this sideboard/display unit has been built using traditional Chinese wood-joinery techniques, but the overall design is a blend of classic Chinese and modern styles. With three pieces in the set, it offers great flexibility, and is available in various wood stains and dimensions, to suit any style of home interior. Room 2008-2015, 20/F, Horizon Plaza, 2 Lee Wing Street, Ap Lei Chau. **3542 5336**
facebook.com/orientalhomehk ▼



LET THERE BE LIGHT

Zodiac Lighting, one of Hong Kong's leading lighting companies – no easy feat in a city of light – now offers the latest products from **Lutron**, including all-in-one lighting control systems. These innovative, integrated and high-tech systems control lighting, window shades and audio-visual equipment, while also being energy-saving. Experience the system for yourself in the Lutron corner of the Zodiac showroom. G/F-1/F, Amber Commercial Building, 70-74 Morrison Hill Road, Wan Chai. **2882 9082** ▼





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A Dynamic DUO



Tequila Kola has long been known as the place to go to furnish a home in Hong Kong. As the brand approaches its 25th year, founders GEOFF FULLER and MICHELLE KOLLER open the doors of their Parkview apartment to *Expat Living* and discuss the evolution of the brand. Their stunning home not only exemplifies the “Tequila Kola lifestyle”, but it also suggests that sometimes the best way to succeed in business is to bring your work home with you!



Geoff and Michelle now,
and in the early days.



What was the inspiration behind Tequila Kola?

We've both always wanted to own our own business and, in 1991, when we started Tequila Kola, we thought there was a gap in the market for a fashion-forward home/lifestyle store.

How did you go about setting up the business?

Michelle: I found it difficult to get work as a technical person in the fashion business; most jobs that I looked at involved very long hours for not much money, so I started Tequila Kola ... and initially worked incredibly long hours for no money! To get the business going, we rented a shop in the Prince's Building and used our Pok Fu Lam flat as a warehouse.

Geoff: I was initially transferred to Hong Kong with a big multinational company; I joined Tequila Kola in early 1994.





How has it evolved over the past twenty years?

Initially, Tequila Kola started as a broad-based lifestyle store: we sold everything from earrings to dining room tables – even antique radios! We have evolved into a sophisticated, focused, upscale home emporium with unique products combined with striking visual merchandising. Customers, including many interior designers, come to us for our take on the latest in home fashion. We're now very well known in Hong Kong and throughout Southern China.

As a husband and wife team, what do you each bring to the business?

Michelle: I have a background in fashion, so I'm in charge of all things creative.

Geoff: I handle the finances, HR, and the admin side of things. We're completely different, but our skills complement each other – if we had the same skills we could not have started the business together.



What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of running a business as a couple?

Working together as husband and wife isn't for everyone, and it can put pressure on your relationship at times, particularly if things are not going well. But there are definite advantages – you're unequivocally on the same side, plus when you are successful this is shared both emotionally and financially.

What's your idea of "taking work home"?

We try not to talk about work when we're home ... but we nearly always do! To be successful, you have to fine-tune things and move forward all the time. This means discussing ideas and trends quite a lot.

Do you try many of the pieces in your own home?

Of course! We're passionate about interiors and love to try new things – that's why we design and buy new collections all the time.



Are you constantly rearranging and redecorating?

Yes, we recently updated our dining room with a new dining table (chrome base with railway sleeper top) and a green accent wall with matching massive carved green mirror. It looks great!

Got any practical advice for our readers on how to run a successful business?

Work hard (especially at the beginning), surround yourself with good people and constantly reinvent the business. In addition, it helps if the lucky business fairy smiles upon you!





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antique officer cabinet, 1910s'

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|  www.facebook.com/orientalhomehk |



Geoff discusses four of the couple's favourite pieces:

- **The painting in the dining room, "Languida".** It's mixed media on canvas by a well-known Spanish artist, Mersuka Dopazo. Mersuka's paintings are portraits of the world, its people and their emotions. She creates expressions of reality, which have emerged from her multiple travels and become intertwined with her own life and personal experiences. We love it because of its playful, carefree, flowing use of colour and texture. We feel energised and uplifted when we look at it.

- **The Yin and Yang artwork in the foyer.** In Chinese philosophy, Yin and Yang describes how apparently opposite or contrary forces are actually complementary, interconnected and interdependent in the natural world, and how they give rise to each other as they interrelate to one another. Michelle and I are very much Yin and Yang – quite opposite in a lot of ways but very interconnected. And behind Yin and Yang is a large wine and golf club storage area!

- **The large green mirror at the entrance to the living room.** This is Michelle's favourite mirror. When redecorating over the years the mirror has been repainted; it's been natural, silver, red and, the latest colour, green. When painting the mirror this time we used Eico paint, a completely non-toxic environmentally friendly paint made in Iceland and now available from Tequila Kola.

- **The vintage prints in the bedroom.** These are from black-and-white photos taken by Michelle's late father, Robert Koller, a Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer. Bob spent many painstaking hours colouring the photos (which were mainly of movie stars) by hand in his small basement studio.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Tequila Kola

Flagship Designer Showroom
1/F, Horizon Plaza, Ap Lei Chau
2877 3295 | tequilakola.com

SHOPPING – MICHELLE

Diane Von Furstenberg | dvf.com
Lane Crawford | lanecrawford.com
Lulu Lemon | Shop 1098B,
IFC Mall, 8 Finance Street, Central
Vivienne Tam | viviennetam.com
On Pedder | New World Tower,
16-18 Queen's Road, Central

SHOPPING – GEOFF

Pink | thomaspink.com
Ted Baker Shop | Shop 147,
1/F Pacific Place, Admiralty
Hugo Boss | hugoboss.com
Ecco | hk.ecco.com

RESTAURANTS

Tapeo
Shop A, Au's Building,
15-19 Hollywood Road, Central
3171 1989

Bibo
G/F, 163 Hollywood Road, Sheung Wan
2956 3188

22 Ships
22 Ship St, Wan Chai
2555 0722

Ham and Sherry
1-7 Ship St, Wan Chai
2555 0628

The Pawn

62 Johnston Road, Wan Chai
2866 3444

Missy Ho

48 Forbes St, Kennedy Town
2817 3808

HIDDEN GEMS

Melbourne Cup Day

("try to go to this event at Happy Valley
in November")

Ned Kelly's

("for great, old-time jazz")
11A Ashley Rd, Tsim Sha Tsui
2376 0562 



Sofa, So Good



Sofas are much more than a place to perch our derrières while we catch up with the latest episode of a favourite TV show. As a focal point within one of the key rooms in the house, the sofa is an important reflection of our living space and lifestyle. We asked JOJOBA LAM of online contemporary furniture outlet **Stockroom** for tips on purchasing the right sofa for you and your home.

What's your preferred style of sofa?
I love lying on a sofa, enjoying some cosy time as a break from my busy working life. Ideally, a sofa should be cool in summer and warm in winter; feather-down sofas are therefore my preference because they come with a blended material of foam and feather that not only gives comfort but can also be very stylish at the same. This type of sofa tends to be weather-resistant, and there are plenty of colour and pattern options.

Could you provide some advice on fabrics for our readers?

Our sales team is often asked about the most appropriate type of sofa to buy for families with children; our response is to explain that different sofas have different features. Many people choose fabric sofas for their versatile patterns and colours; it's easy to match your existing décor or interior concept. Leather swatches are more limited in colour and pattern.

The advantage of leather sofas, however, is that they can survive the abuse of everyday use – they're tough, durable and resistant against water damage, and they don't collect dirt or grease. So, they're more kid-friendly and pet-friendly. Leather sofas also retain their beauty for a long period of time, and they give a high-end, luxurious look to a home, regardless of whether the living room is in a contemporary or traditional style.

What about colours? When should you buy a white or light-coloured sofa?

When choosing the colour of your sofa, you should consider your entire décor, including the shade of the floor. As a rule of thumb, you may want to pick a colour



Amelio soft genuine leather sofa

that contrasts the colour of the floor – or just choose something neutral.

For fans of fabric sofas, we recommend choosing dark-coloured fabrics if it's for a household with kids or pets. Apart from particular colours, customers are also advised to choose a sofa with removable and washable covers. Our feather-down sofa collection gives you the flexibility of removing the entire cover for dry-cleaning or buying extra-full sofa covers for a fresher look every time.

Are there any fabrics that don't seem to work so well in Hong Kong?

In my opinion, every fabric works well here, so it's just a matter of preference and the sofa's setting within the home.

What about style? Are there styles or fabrics that don't date?

The question of what's a timeless sofa style is a subjective one; I usually say a design is timeless if the sofa is well proportioned to your area, blends well with your interior, and continues to serve the purpose for its intended user. As for fabric colours, neutral shades are generally considered to be timeless, and they fit well with different environments.

Stockroom can provide you with insights into new sofa trends. The trends for modern furniture design in 2016, for example, will be contemporary materials, bright upholstery fabrics and innovative frames that will not only revolutionise the industry but offer beautiful, multifunctional and practical home-decorating ideas.



Romano fabric sofa



Aquarius fabric sofa

However, no matter how many awards a design or designer has won, it still all boils down to comfort and functionality.

Are modulars still “in”?

Yes, most modular sofas can be considered “timeless” because they're comfortable and also practical. A modular sofa gives you more seating space and allows you to avoid dead corner spaces.

What's your bestseller?

Our feather-down sofas. Among our selection, the most popular are probably

the Kagan L-shape and Vella sofas. From our foam sofa collection, it's the Aquarius sofa that tops the sales chart; the Italian design embraces both a minimalistic concept and a contemporary style, making it an ideal piece for any family room.

To see a huge range of sofa ideas for your home, click on the “sofas” tab at the Stockroom website, stockroom.com.hk.



The Great Outdoors

With the weather at its best, it's prime time to get out and about, so make the most of things with our jam-packed feature of outdoor furniture and accessories.



There may not be many of us in Hong Kong that have the quintessential picnic garden, but there are still some lovely outdoor spots to go for a picnic. Whatever age we might be, our inner child likes the idea of setting up an outdoor camp, even if it's just for a few hours.

So, now that we're heading into cooler months, take the time to set off on an adventure. At **INSIDE** you'll find umbrellas, marquees and kids' castles (play tents). There's also a wonderful collection of picnic accessories, acrylic tumblers and gorgeous paisley jugs and trays.

And, if your outdoor adventure only gets you as far as the patio, then make the place a bit more atmospheric with a Moroccan lantern or teak hurricane lantern.

INSIDE has three boutique lifestyle stores in Hong Kong:
231 Landmark Prince's Building,
Central;
1201 Horizon Plaza, Ap Lei Chau;
G104, The Repulse Bay

inside.com.hk



Designer Style

By Brooke Chenoweth

In the 19 years that they've been in business, the team at **Everything Under the Sun** have seen lots of changes in outdoor furniture design; they also know a thing or two about quality – and which brands they can trust to deliver products that look great and are built to last.

There has been plenty of research in Europe into design practices that combine innovation, style and function, and it's no surprise that brands are constantly striving to improve their materials while following the latest trends.

An example is advancements in the manufacture of outdoor fabrics, particularly cushions. Cushions that are weatherproof, soft to touch and comfortable are the current trend – the Gloster Grid Modular Sofa features these cushions. Furniture frames are being made from powder-coated aluminium, which looks clean and stylish, while also being sturdy and practical at the same time. Materials like teak, stainless steel and high-pressure laminate tabletops are still featuring, but in a more sleek

and polished form – today's styles have as much thought put into the aesthetic side of things as the functional. Even the humble umbrella has had an overhaul, with US brands like Tuuci employing marine engineering techniques in their products; their cantilever design, for example, is practical and popular, but it also looks great.

There are so many styles and brands of outdoor furniture available in Hong Kong, but there's also a huge difference in quality and style. If you invest in an outdoor setting that's made well – the kind of products that Everything Under the Sun specialises in – you're likely to end up with a product you can enjoy for many years, as opposed to one that you will throw out after the next typhoon!

Tuuci Bay Master Cantilever

Looking good for longer

To keep your outdoor furniture in top condition, the team at Everything Under the Sun recommend the following:

- Buy wisely. Look for quality outdoor furniture featuring functional design, and using high-grade raw materials in a quality manufacturing process.
- Get your protective covers custom-made and use them frequently. Also, remove them occasionally to give everything a good airing in the months that you're not outdoors for very long.
- A small amount of regular cleaning is advised. While most furniture can be cleaned with a brush and some fresh water, a range of dedicated cleaning products are available. ☐

Everything Under the Sun is at 902 Horizon Plaza, 2 Lee Wing St, Ap Lei Chau. 2554 9088 | everythingunderthesun.com.hk

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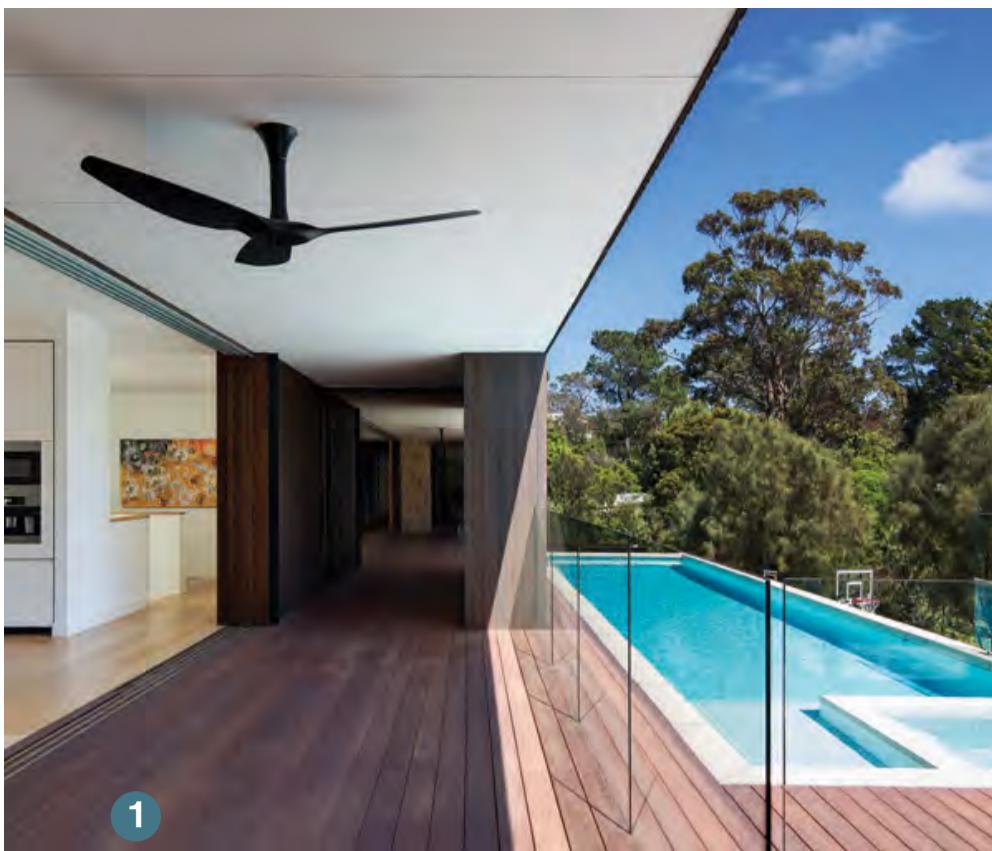
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 GLOSTER



Going Alfresco

From tea for two on a small balcony to cocktails at dusk in an expansive garden, check out our spread of outdoor furniture in stores now to suit any style.





1. Haiku 60 Black Composite fan, \$7,550, **Big Ass Fans**, 2836 5808, bigassfans.hk **2.** Monet rattan easy chair, \$3,290, and foot stool, \$1,490, by Sika Design, **Bowerbird**, 2552 2727, bowerbird-home.com **3.** Lustgarten candleholders in iron and glass, from \$680, **Tequila Kola**, 2877 3295, tequilakola.com **4.** Gloster Grid Lounge range in sustainable teak and other materials, **Everything Under the Sun**, 2554 9088, everythingunderthesun.com.hk **5.** Siesta outdoor sofa, **OVOhome**, 2526 7226, ovo.com.hk **6.** Verner Panton-style chair, reduced to \$920 (originally \$1,990), **Stockroom Furniture Outlet**, 2817 0999, stockroom.com.hk **7.** Outdoor Bonnet by Liset van der Sheer for Casalis, **SeventyAM**, 2813 5565, seventyam.com **8.** Retford lantern, \$1,990, **Indigo Living**, 2555 0540, indigo-living.com **9.** Cabaret easy armchair, \$24,600, **OVOhome** **10.** Aspen cantilever umbrella, Belgium-made, available in grey or taupe, \$13,780, **Lift Lifestyle**, 3907 0386, liftlifestyle.com



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11. Kado seating, **OVOhome**, 2526 7226, ovo.com.hk **12.** Beefeater barbecue signature series and outdoor kitchen in stainless steel, **Jervisbay Barbecues**, 2792 7268, jervisbaybarbecues.com **13.** Serif barstools in polyethylene with rotational moulding technology, **OVOstudio**, 2529 6060, ovo.com.hk **14.** Xavier Pauchard Tolix-style chair, reduced to \$1,140 (originally \$1,640), **Stockroom Furniture Outlet**, 2817 0999, stockroom.com.hk **15.** Brisbane BBQ, \$7,380, **Lift Lifestyle**, 3907 0386, liftlifestyle.com **16.** Calyx Easy Armchairs, from \$21,400, **OVOhome**



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- 17.** Tuuci Bay Master Cantilever, **Everything Under the Sun**, 2554 9088, everythingunderthesun.com.hk
18. Grand drum stool, reduced to \$990 (originally \$2,990), **Stockroom Furniture Outlet**
19. Gloster Bells side tables in aluminium and brushed teak, can be used as a table, seat or ice bucket, **Everything Under the Sun** **20.** & **21.** Hand-painted polyresin stools, Tequila Kola, 2877 3295, tequilakola.com
22. Casilas outdoor furniture, **SeventyAM**, 2813 5565, seventyam.com

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Interior Tips:

3 WAYS TO BRING THE OUTDOORS IN

Many people in Hong Kong don't have the luxury of a home with an outdoor area – or, if they're lucky, they have just a tiny balcony off the side of a high-rise. So we've asked two members of the **Bowerbird** team – owner PHILIPPA HAYDON and new designer JAMIE WILKIE – for advice on how to make the most of the space you have.



#1 Dress up a balcony

The best way to bring the outside in is to minimise the boundaries between your indoor and outdoor spaces; the spaces need to flow together, be connected visually and aesthetically, and be inviting and practical.

If at all possible, finish the exterior flooring to match the interior flooring so the living room extends visually to the outdoors and vice versa. Use sliding or folding doors that appear frameless or are set into the floor and have no lip: if the surfaces inside and out are the same level, there is less physical barrier between the spaces.

Regardless of the size of your outdoor space, even the smallest table and chair set can invite you out and bridge the divide. Alternatively, consider adding a low built-in seating area (with potential storage underneath), topped with long lounge cushions. Couple it with small garden stools that can double as seats or side tables to rest drinks on, a cute rug, some greenery and you're good to go.

If space is particularly limited, consider a windowsill herb garden, vertical wall garden or terrariums. Lanterns and an interesting chandelier are other worthy considerations. Large mirrors on balcony walls can capture the view and add to the sense of space, especially if you're living in a high-rise.

#2 Accessorise with natural elements

Between the heat, humidity and air-conditioning, we're lucky if we can keep fresh flowers looking respectable for more than two or three days. They do, however, soften a room and add that finishing touch, and silk flowers are a brilliant alternative. We love to mix flowers in the same way you would when picking flowers from a garden. Our favourite trick is to mix real and silk flowers and stand them in a clear glass vase with water.

For a natural beach look, beautiful nautical shells in glass frames or shadow boxes can make fantastic wall art. A piece of sea-fan coral under a cloche creates a lovely accent, and shells and coral grouped together on a sideboard or table, or on a shelf, can instantly add focus and a nautical flair to any room. Use a glass vase or bowl, pop in a candle, add some sand, place shells or starfish around the candle and place it on a side table, and again you have yourself a small accent piece. Lastly, whenever you're on holidays, collect sand and shells from your trip and store them in apothecary jars – not only are they beautiful to look at, but they're also a reminder of many wonderful family holidays.

When it comes to soft furnishings, choose colours, patterns and fabrics that use natural tones or shapes that complement the view or outdoor environment. This is another easy way to achieve the connection between the outdoors and inside.



#3 Go green!

Using plants is one of the easiest ways to bring the outdoors in, especially if you're living in a high-rise apartment: by placing potted plants or even herbs on a shelf or table, you can add freshness to the space. Bringing plants into your living environment is also an excellent way to purify your air. They work well in any interior by bringing in life and colour, and they can also make a home feel more lived in and relaxed.

Think outside the box and turn ceramic wall planters into works of art. Cluster a few plants of varying heights and textures on a trunk or side table to create height and visual interest. If you have a vintage chair you enjoy looking at more than sitting in, consider using it as a plant stand to put both on display. ☀

Bowerbird is at Unit 5, Level 2,
Oceanic Industrial Centre,
2 Lee Lok Street, Ap Lei Chau.
2552 2727 | bowerbird-home.com



LANTAU LIVING

*By Brooke Chenoweth;
photography by Suzanne Goodwin*



REBEKAH NICHOLS and her husband Ewald are both pilots, and their stunning village house in Pui O, on Lantau, manages to showcase the best aspects of both their international lifestyles and their island home.

The house feels nothing like a typical Hong Kong village house, and you've clearly put a lot of thought into the design and fittings; how did you go about it?

We wanted to be able to cook and entertain, so the kitchen was our biggest priority. We also wanted the kitchen to be on the middle level, to take advantage of the views of the trees all around, and we didn't want to be traipsing all the way to the ground floor if we were eating out on the rooftop. Once we had made that decision, everything evolved from there. Ewald designed the layout using architectural software on the computer, and we had some technical help from my sister who's an interior designer. I did a lot of research into where to source fittings and appliances, and ended up buying most of it online from various countries.

That sounds like a lot of fun! Where did everything come from?

All the kitchen and laundry appliances, along with the bath and TV, were bought online in the UK and shipped for less than the amount we saved on the bath. The laundry and outside tiles I bought on a trip to Ho Chi Minh, and they are one of my favourite features of the house. We sourced the Travertine from China through Alibaba. All the wooden furniture



in the house, the stair treads, the front door and gate is recycled Indonesian teak from a company in Surabaya. The tap-ware is all Dornbracht with Hansgrohe Rainshowers, bought online and shipped from Germany. I really wanted louvered windows and we found an Australian company that manufactures in Malaysia, and they were able to supply them directly to us. Our LZF bed-lamps were bought online from an Irish company that buys direct from the manufacturer in Spain – I don't know how he sells them cheaper than the manufacturer! I also found lighting in Italy, the UK and Sydney.

You have some beautiful pieces from around the world; describe your approach to shopping for the house – do you go out looking for something specific, buy things you love on sight, or a bit of both?

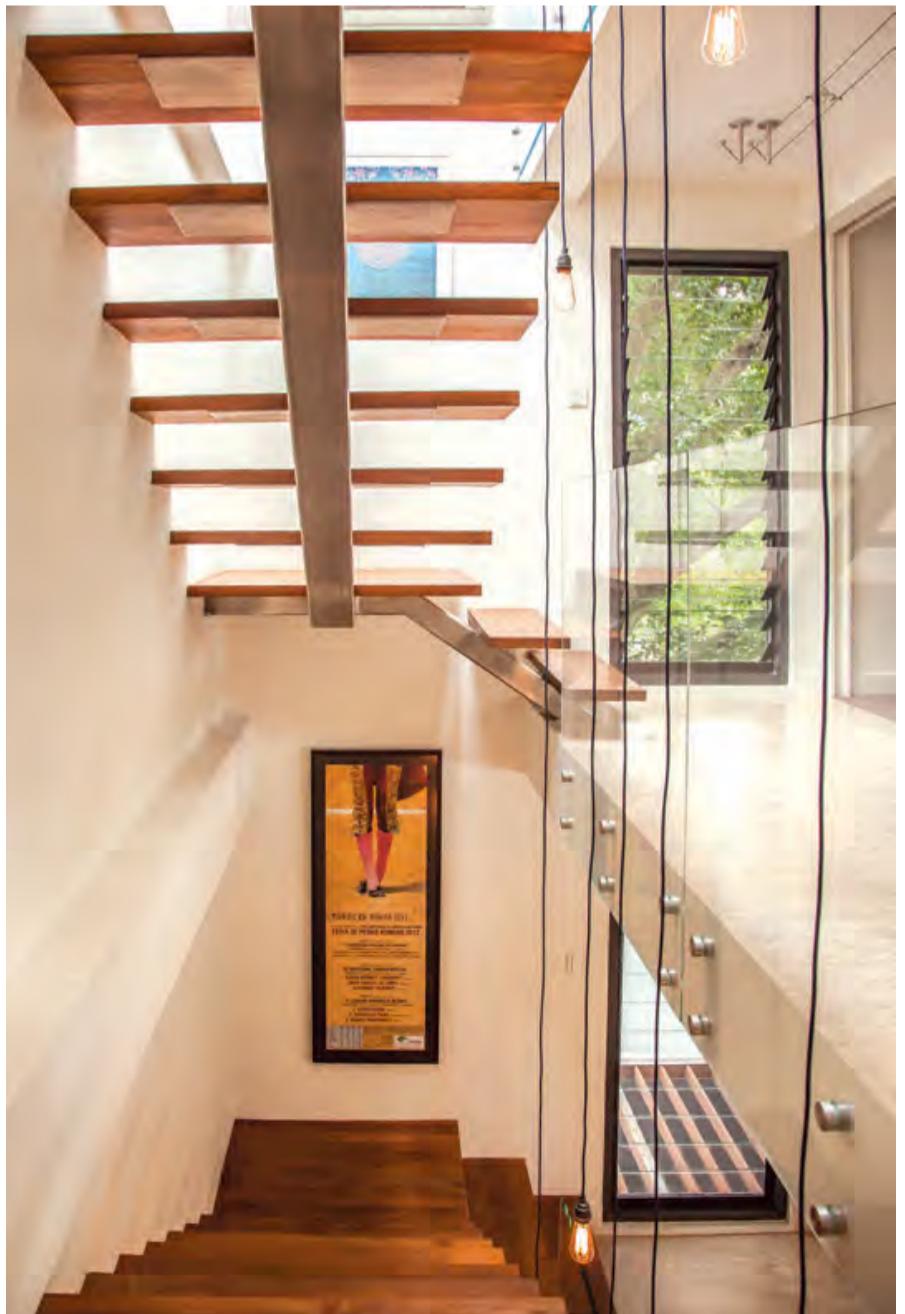
We never think, "Oh, we need this," and go and get it (except our Belinda Bath canvas where we wanted to fill a space with something from HK). Everything in the house has a meaning. We have our art from trips to Vietnam, Berber pieces from Morocco, posters and pieces from my trips to India. I've also had a

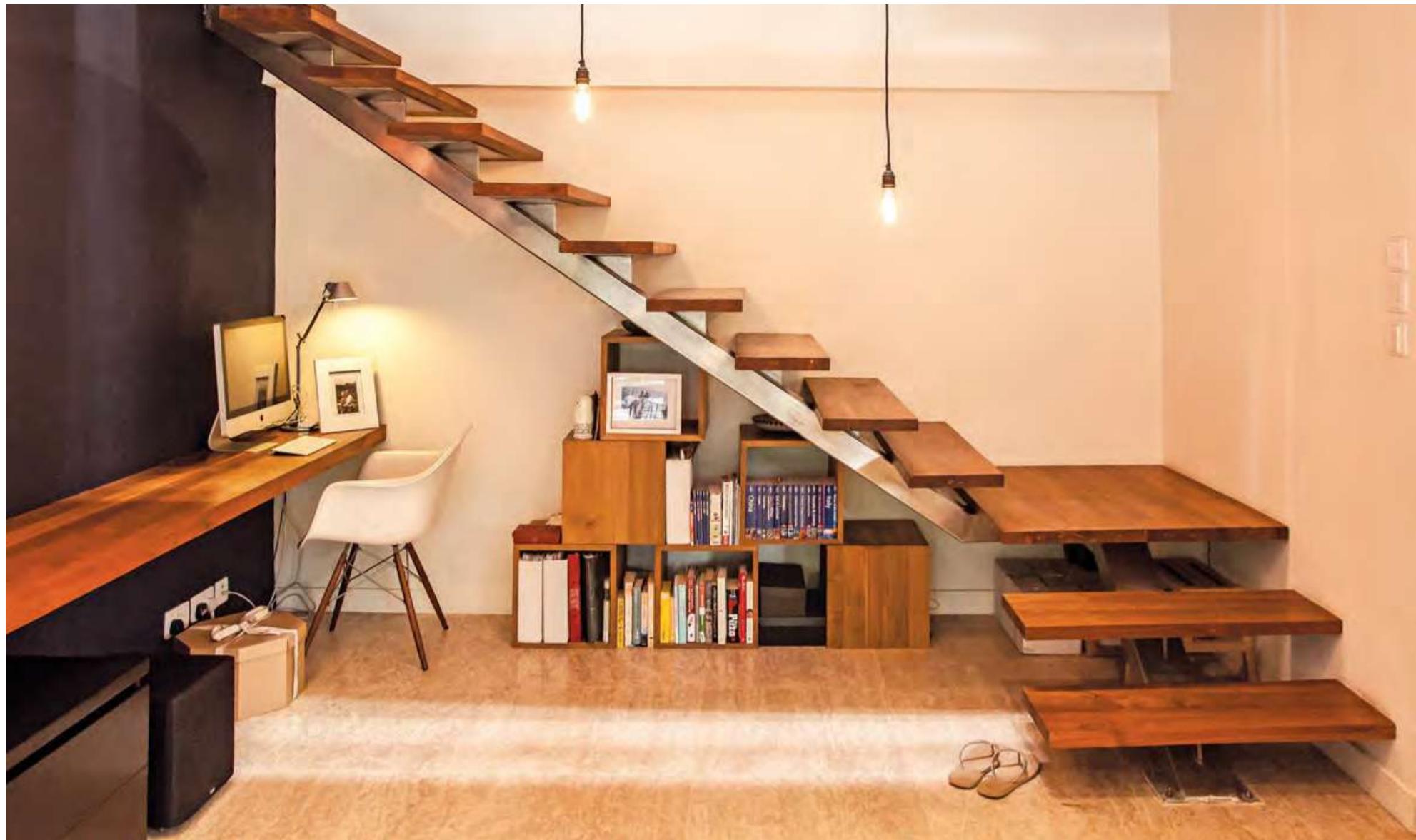
vintage baggage label of the Grand Hotel Tremezzo blown up into a poster as it's where Ewald and I got engaged. My most random purchase was a bunch of old fashioned pharmacy bottles that I found in a market in Strasbourg. It's a slowly evolving collection. We also have lots of Georg Jensen Home pieces, mainly house-warming and wedding gifts (clever friends!).

You have an interesting little collection of jars, and a wombat in your living room; can you tell me more about that?

We were married at Emirates Wolgan Valley Resort in the Blue Mountains, near Sydney. Wollie the wombat is hand-carved from Huon pine by a local artist, and is a feature at the hotel – he sits on the bedside table and indicates when you want your linen changed (they're eco friendly so won't do it every day). We wanted to buy him but there was a waiting list and he cost a fortune, so we decided against it. Ewald bought him for us for our first wedding anniversary. He now sits beside our jars of sand. We did a sand ceremony, combining sand from Australia and South Africa, which represent us – we have individual jars of sand, but also a combined container – impossible to separate!







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PYRMONT
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SURRY HILLS
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What's your favourite piece in the house and why?

Our favourite thing is our poster from the bullfight we spontaneously went to (never again!) in Rhonda, Spain. We searched high and low but could only get a tiny little poster from the ticket window, so we took it to a place in Central where they photographed it and blew it up as big as they could. We think it's incredibly beautiful, and it's probably one of a kind. It gives us great memories of our Spain trip, and we had to work for it!

Where in the house do you spend most of your time?

When we're home alone, E lives in the room we call his Tree House: his music studio/office. I float around on the

bottom two floors. I never go upstairs! We designed the ground floor a bit like a hotel suite. It's a small area but it's self-contained and I feel quite safe and cosy down there when Ewald is away.

If you had to go through the process of renovating again, what would you do differently?

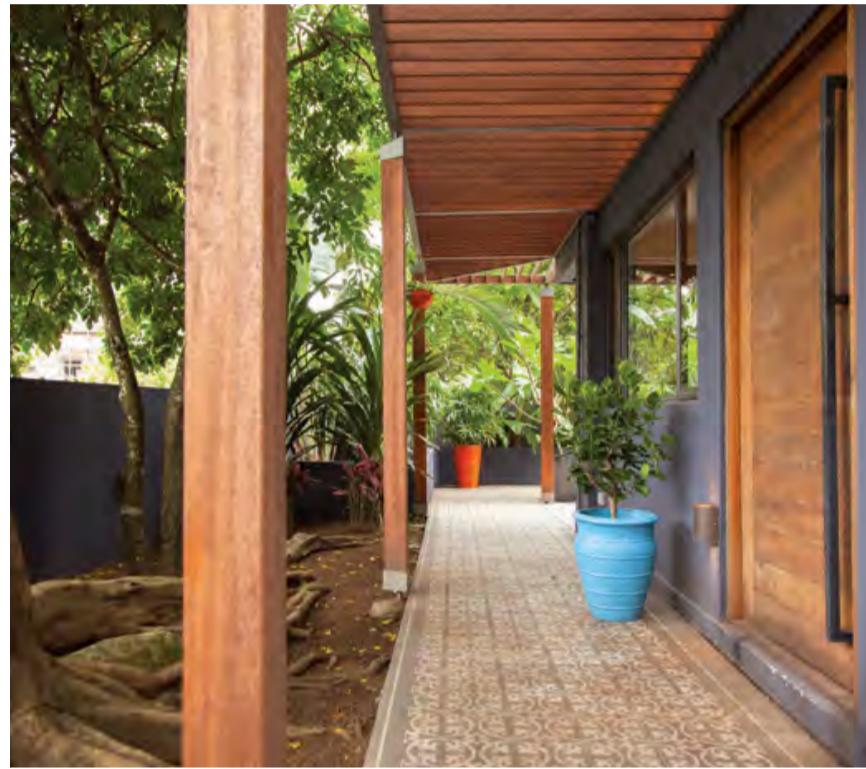
We'd make sure we have detailed plans. We asked over and over for plans to be done and we were assured they would be. Needless to say, there were no plans and despite our instructions there were many times where the builders made assumptions based on "what all the other expats do." Too many times we'd turn up and have to tell them to rip things out because we had very different ideas about what we wanted.

If you could take one room from this house to your next one, which would it be and why?

There would be two: the kitchen and the master bathroom. The kitchen is from Poliform and it's everything we wanted in a kitchen and more. Bathrooms in Hong Kong seem to be a utilitarian afterthought. Our bathroom is so serene; it's got double rain-showerheads, a bath that fits two people, and views out through the louvered windows onto more greenery. Then there's the outdoor shower, which is a total luxury in Hong Kong. I think E would like to take his music studio. He'll always have the equipment, but perhaps not the space to fit it all in.

Your kitchen has some very cool features; can you tell me about them?

There's the integrated coffee machine, the wine fridge and our chiller drawer. The chiller drawer was a birthday present for me from E. I really wanted one but thought that it was too frivolous, so decided against it. E knew how much I wanted it, so he bought it without me knowing. Thank goodness he did because without it we wouldn't have nearly enough fridge space!



What are some of the things you love about living on Lantau?

The lush greenery, the buffalos, and we have several families of bulbuls in the trees outside our house. You can actually look into one of their nests from E's music studio.

You said you started out wanting to achieve a “beachy look” but it evolved into something else. Can you elaborate? How would you describe the look you have today?

We thought since part of Lantau's appeal is its beaches we'd end up with something kind of “beachy”. We have trees out every window so it ended up with a more serene, tropical feel. Our master bedroom and living room look into our lush green garden, and the rooms upstairs have mountain views. The kitchen, which we chose purely because we loved it, is far from a shabby beach style and really dominates the house. Thinking about it, I don't think we really have a “look”. It's just us. ☺

Recommendations

Caz Interiors

127 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai
2506 2323

Everything Under the Sun

9/F, Horizon Plaza
2 Lee Wing Street, Ap Lei Chau
2554 9088
everythingunderthesun.com.hk

Georg Jensen Home

Shop 120, Prince's Building, Central
georgejensen.com

Poliform

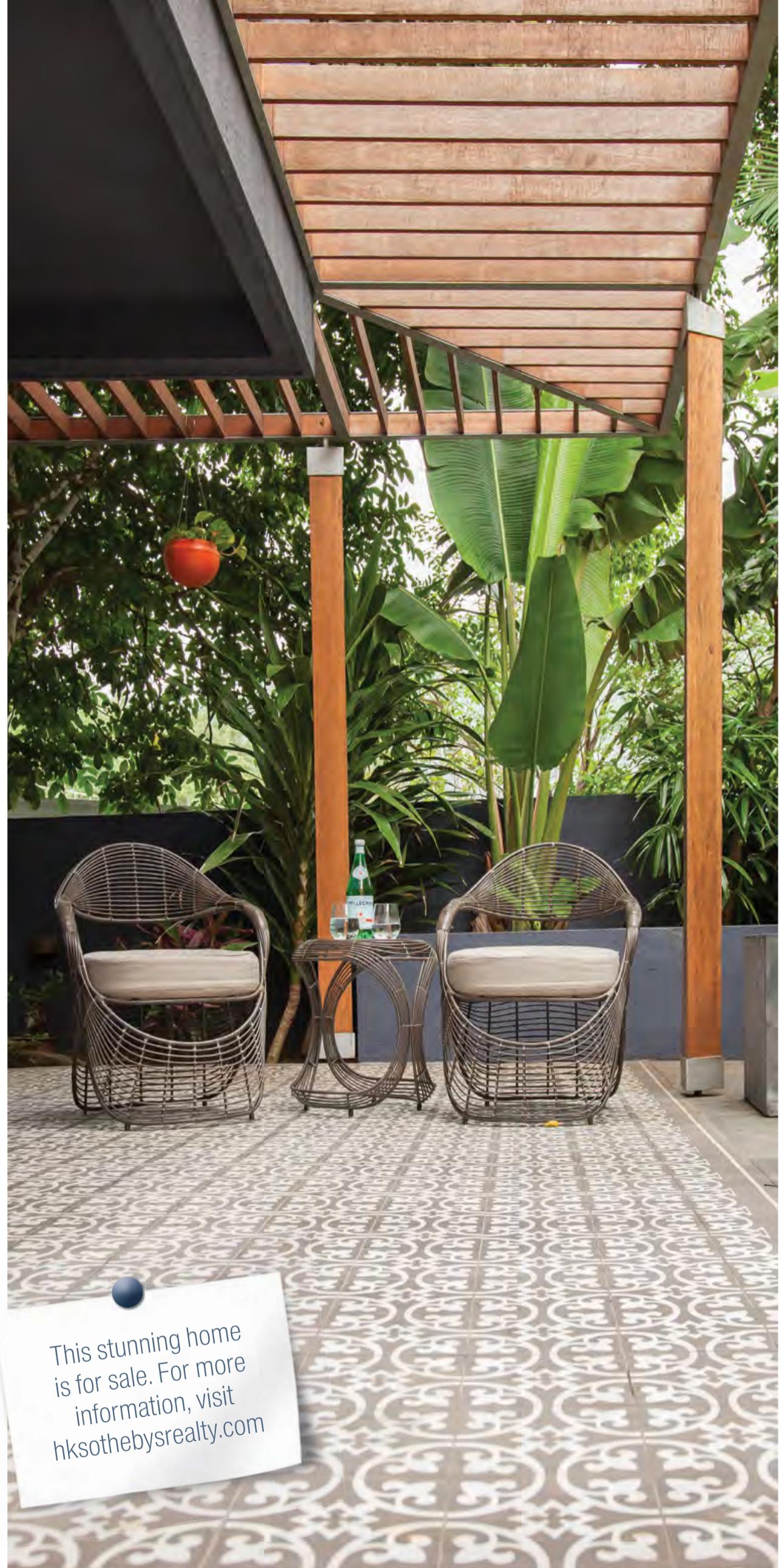
3 Wing Fung Street, Wan Chai
3102 3189 | info@viahk.biz

Tequila Kola

1/F, Horizon Plaza
2 Lee Wing Street, Ap Lei Chau
tequilakola.com

TREE

28/F, Horizon Plaza
2 Lee Wing Street, Ap Lei Chau
tree.com.hk





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Mix and Match

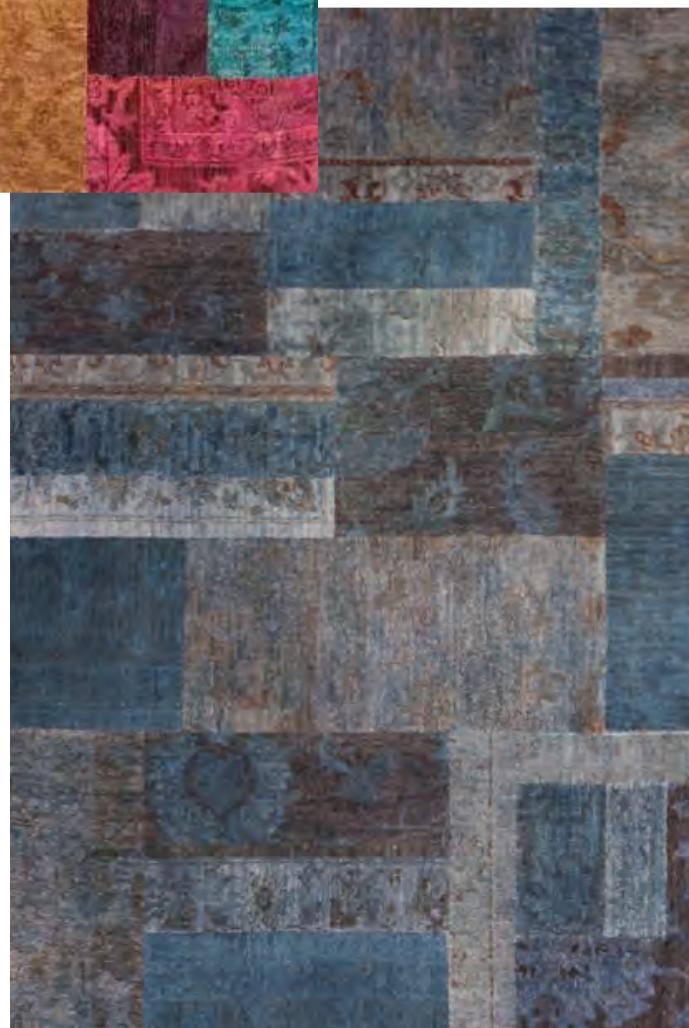
If you love traditional oriental carpets but you're after something a little different, have a look at these striking patchwork carpets available at **Carpet Buyer**. Each piece has been cut from top-quality woolen carpets made in Pakistan and especially woven for this purpose.

The carpets are made with yarn dyed with natural vegetable colours and, once completed, are cut into pieces and hand-sewn together by designers to make these unique pieces of art.

A range of sizes is available, from 1.8 by 1.2 metres up to 3 by 4 metres, and colours vary from subtle blue/taupe tones to dramatic greens, pinks and purples.

The great thing is, if you switch your interior look from classic to contemporary or minimalist these carpets will still mix and match. ☺

Carpet Buyer is at 1718, 17/F, Horizon Plaza, 2 Lee Wing Street, Ap Lei Chau.
2850 5508 | carpetbuyer.com





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www.ovo.com.hk

Antiques and Vintage

Décor trends have changed over the years – there's been a definite move to a more contemporary look. However, nothing beats having a feature piece (or three!) like these in your home to make it feel sophisticated and complete. And when you leave they'll be something to remind you of your Hong Kong stay.



1



2

1. Fine gilt-painted cabinet, black lacquer over softwood, Shanxi Province, 19th century, HK\$30,000, **Altfield Interiors**, 2524 4867, altfield.com.hk **2.** Kamon emblem, used to identify nobe and samurai clans, \$9,000, **OVOhome**, 2526 7226, ovo.com.hk **3.** Pair of horseshoe armchairs in elm wood, Shanxi Province, 19th century, \$26,000, **Altfield Interiors** **4.** Antique Senneh carpet, circa 1930, **Carpet Buyer**, 2850 5508, carpetbuyer.com **5.** Modern Chinese-style side table, reduced to \$1,890 (originally \$2,690), **Stockroom Furniture Outlet**, 2817 0999, stockroom.com.hk



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12. Vintage-style Chinese cabinet, reduced to HK\$4,999 (originally \$9,999), **Stockroom Furniture Outlet**, 2817 0999, stockroom.com.hk **13.** Altar table in elm wood, Beijing, 19th century, \$39,800, **Altfeld Interiors**, 2524 4867, altfeld.com.hk **14.** Coffer in elm wood, Shanxi Province, 19th century, \$25,000, **Altfeld Interiors** **15.** Doctor's desk in hardwood with chrome gold and jade fittings, **Forbidden City**, 2556 8968, forbiddencity.com.hk **16.** Antique silk Hereke carpet, circa 1940, **Carpet Buyer**, 2850 5508, carpetbuyer.com **17.** Meiji Bronze temple lantern, \$39,000, **OVohome**, 2526 7226, ovo.com.hk

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Haiku 52

Modern Luxury, Natural Comfort, Just Smaller



Offering unprecedented energy efficiency and silent, wobble-free operation, the 52-inch (1.3-m) Haiku® is designed to fit smaller residential spaces.

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RELOCATION REVELATIONS

Sooner or later, Moving Day arrives for almost every expat. Whether your belongings are bound for Stanley or Sydney, relocation is enough to send most of us into a nail-biting panic. Fear not. Here, a couple of our readers share their straightforward and stress-free moving experiences, and we provide some useful tips for those heading further afield.

MOVING IN

JAMES POON

Company used: reloSMART

I've moved four times in the past few years: from Hong Kong to Singapore for work, then back to Hong Kong to a village house, then back to the city, and then a few months later to the Southside.

Each move has involved me and my three cats, along with all my furniture, including my baby grand piano. I also have a small statue of the Virgin Mary and when I moved back to Hong Kong

from Singapore, I found her all alone in a box. Out of respect for my religion, the movers didn't pack her with my other stuff. It was a very respectful gesture.

Each time I've moved, I've engaged the services of reloSMART. I was more than satisfied with their services and wouldn't use any other companies – what I love most about using reloSMART is their speed at packing and unpacking. My first move to Singapore involved around 110 boxes, and when I moved back to Hong Kong nine months later I had 130 boxes;

the number increases every time I move! The move is also not the easiest when I tend to live only in walkups.

To be honest, the reason I chose reloSMART over other companies initially was because of their Pet Relocation Services; from the first phone call, I could quickly identify the consultant as a crazy pet lover. Since I was going to use them for my pets, I decided to try them out with everything else. I'm so happy I did!

2561 3030 | relosmart.asia

EMILY SEAH

Company used: Crown Relocation

My husband and I and our two children (ages 4 and 2) recently relocated to Hong Kong from Singapore; this was our third international move. In terms of the quantity of goods, we had a large amount of kitchenware and clothing to move, but not a great deal of furniture, aside from our leather sofa. Also in our shipment were my most cherished Chanel purses, which I was confident Crown would take care of. We didn't have any special requirements, other than making sure everything was wrapped, packaged and labelled accordingly.

We chose Crown based on recommendations from my husband's work colleagues in Hong Kong, and we were happy with the move. The team in Singapore was extremely competent, professional and organised. They arrived early on both scheduled days for packing and the actual move, and they packed each item carefully, and labelled all the boxes perfectly. I was particularly impressed with the packing of our paintings.

On the day of the move, everything went as planned. The supervisor in charge knew what needed to be done, and far surpassed our expectations. We moved into our flat two weeks



after we arrived in Hong Kong. On the day of the move, the Hong Kong team was punctual, professional, efficient and helpful.

I think what helped make this move successful was the constant communication between my husband and the Crown team in Hong Kong. Our move was truly stress-free and hassle-free thanks to Crown Relocation.

2636 8388 | crownrelo.com



MOVING ON

You may have arrived with just one suitcase and an iPad or Blackberry. When it's time to leave, though, you won't believe how much you've accumulated! If you need to relocate furniture, children and pets, then self-packing is not recommended – especially if you value your sanity (and your marriage). International movers such as the two mentioned by our readers on the previous page, and the likes of **Allied Pickfords** and **UniGroup Relocation**, typically provide the following services or will have access to service companies who provide them.

- Packing of your possessions, including all packing materials
- Insurance to cover anything that gets lost or damaged during transit
- Customs clearance and import duty
- Door-to-door delivery and unpacking at the other end
- Putting up pictures and arranging furniture

Shipping can take anywhere between three and six weeks. So, if a long vacation isn't feasible, you may want to consider renting a serviced apartment. If you're going back to a home country, a long stay with family, no matter how much you love them, can make the move even more stressful.

Here are some moving tips you may find helpful:

Papers: Before your movers pack up the contents of your desk, including your passport and visa, it's a good idea to put all the essentials to one side. It can be useful to keep other valuable documents with you, such as birth and marriage certificates, academic certificates, wills, recent bank statements, pay-slips, and income tax returns.

Antiques and valuables: Although moving companies are experts at moving furniture, carting your favourite 200-year-old cabinet across the globe isn't necessarily a good idea. If you're moving on to a humid or extremely dry location, you may wish to consider storing special heirlooms with family or friends back home.

Electrical items: If your home country doesn't work on the British system, you'll need adapters for your electrical appliances you bought in Hong Kong. If you come from North America or Japan, where the voltage is 100-127V, you should know that the voltage here is 224-240V. Adapters and transformers are easily available in hardware stores.

Pets and quarantine:

- For many expats, our furry friends are part of the family and will accompany us on our exotic posting. To take a pet out of Hong Kong, you need to get a Health Certificate approved by the Hong Kong Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) from a local vet.
- Depending on the destination, some animals may require a period of quarantine. Contact the embassy in the new country of residence for up-to-date information on importing animals.
- US citizens returning home can consult the US Government travel site or their Department of Agriculture.
- Expats returning to the UK can find out more at the website, gov.uk. The UK has stricter laws than many countries, with the Department for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) maintaining guidelines for transportation that must be adhered to. [■](#)

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STREET TALK

An insider's guide to life in their 'hood.



Name:
Rachel Jacqueline
Originally from:
Australia
Occupation:
Freelance journalist and creative writer

THE SPECIFICS

Where do you live?

Wing Lok Street.

What's the name of your neighbourhood?

Sheung Wan.

How long have you lived here, and why did you choose the area?

Almost six years.

Why here?

Location, location, location! It's a seven-minute walk into town, a 10-minute (albeit uphill) jog to the trails around the Peak, close to the station and great eateries. It also still has that Hong Kong feel to it: from the antiques on sale at Hollywood Road and Cat Street Galleries to the small industrial and other shops surrounding Bonham Strand and Wing Lok Street – it's a complete mix of Western and Eastern influences.

THE SCENE

When you walk out of your place, the first thing you see is:

Buildings and busyness – that sort of sums up Sheung Wan!

The closest store to your front door is:

I live smack bang in Hong Kong's dried seafood centre. Dried abalone and sea cucumber, anyone?

Your neighbours are great, but you wouldn't mind a little less:

Noise. It's always noisy. At least you're never alone!

The unofficial uniform of your street is:

It's a mix, from urbanites in suits to creative hipsters, and street-stall vendors to mainland tourists.

A common myth about your neighbourhood is:

That it's cheap. It used to be cheap, but Sheung Wan is getting increasingly "hip" and expensive.

When you're in need of a dose of culture, you:

Head to Man Mo Temple on Hollywood Road.

If you're missing home, you:

Head up to Oolaa on Bridges Street. It's got that Aussie vibe.

A mandatory stop for taking out-of-town guests is:

Tai Ping Shan and surrounding streets to check out the hip little shops, cute cafes and cool street art.

You'd swap houses in a second with:

Someone living in the New Territories and closer to the trails. I have to run up the hill to get my dose of green!



If you're ever woken up at night, it's almost always due to:

I'm lucky enough to have double-glazing, so it's usually Hong Kong's hectic thunderstorms.

If a celebrity moves in next door, it will most likely be:

Cara Delevingne.

THE SUPERLATIVES

Your hands-down favourite neighbourhood joints are:

That's a tough one as there are so many, but I've had an enduring Sheung Wan relationship with NoodleMi on Bonham Strand. Their soft-shell crab rice-paper rolls are scrumptious.

You won't find better local food than at:

One of the many *dai pai dongs* on Gough Street, just up the road.

The strangest thing you've ever seen on your street is:

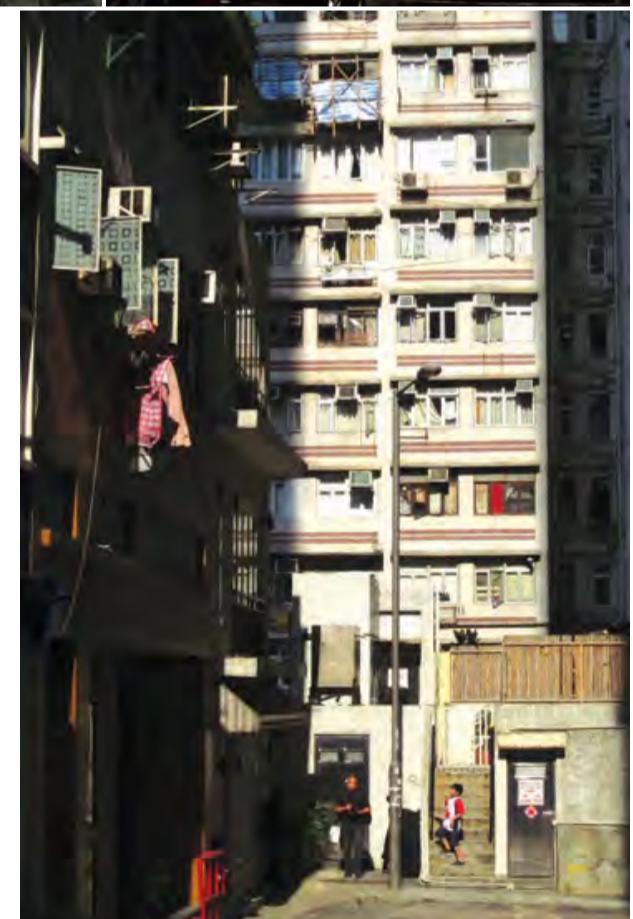
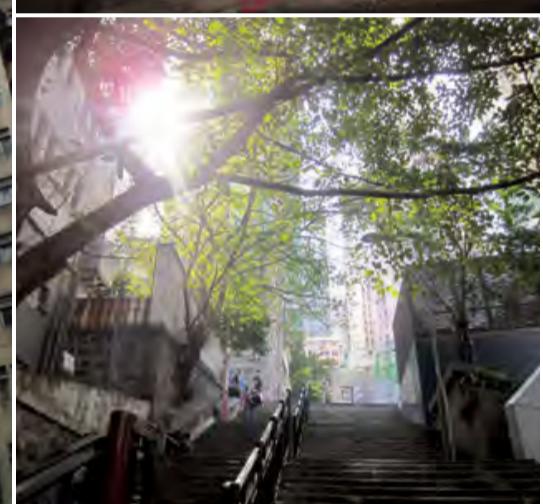
A man walking in Wellies carrying an entire pig carcass over his shoulder.

The best bargains in your neighbourhood are at:

The many sidewalk food stalls. You can bring home a bag of various Asian greens to feed you for a few meals for less than HK\$30.

The guiltiest pleasure in your area is:

The cheese selection at Monsieur Chatte, or a sweet galette from La Creperie.



One thing you'd never change is:

The randomness. Fancy restaurants are nestled in the same street as air-conditioner repairmen. You never know what you're going to encounter, one step to the next.

But one thing you wouldn't mind seeing go is:

The pollution. With buildings so close together, I feel it all gets a little trapped down here.

The city gives you \$5 million to soup up your street. You use it to:

Make it pedestrianised and take out all the traffic.

Why should your neighbourhood be featured in a guidebook?

It remains one of the coolest little 'hoods in the city, hands down. ☺

WHAT'S THE WORD ON YOUR STREET?

We want to know about where you live. Don't be shy! Send an email to contribute@expatliving.hk with "Street Talk" in the subject line. Include your name and street, and we'll be in touch.

Market Update



*Letizia Casalino,
Hong Kong Sotheby's
International Realty*

This summer, the heatwave in Hong Kong had little impact on the property market. Contrary to earlier predictions of declining rentals and sale prices, the market on both fronts remained stable.

The leasing market continued to remain strong. Driving factors for inflating rentals were high occupancy, no oversupply and a low vacancy rate of 4 to 5 percent. Negotiation flexibility in the luxury tier continued and demand for mid-range rental properties rose with little room for negotiation.

The first-hand property market was boosted and buyers flocked to take advantage of the strategic and effective price cuts offered by the developers. Investors showed keen interest

and some developments sold out very quickly.

The second-hand property market did slow down due to the boom in the first-hand market, however prices were not affected. With no change expected in the cooling measures taken by the government, investors and end users are still actively in search for the hidden gems and ready to nab the right property at the right price, bearing in mind that time is of the essence.

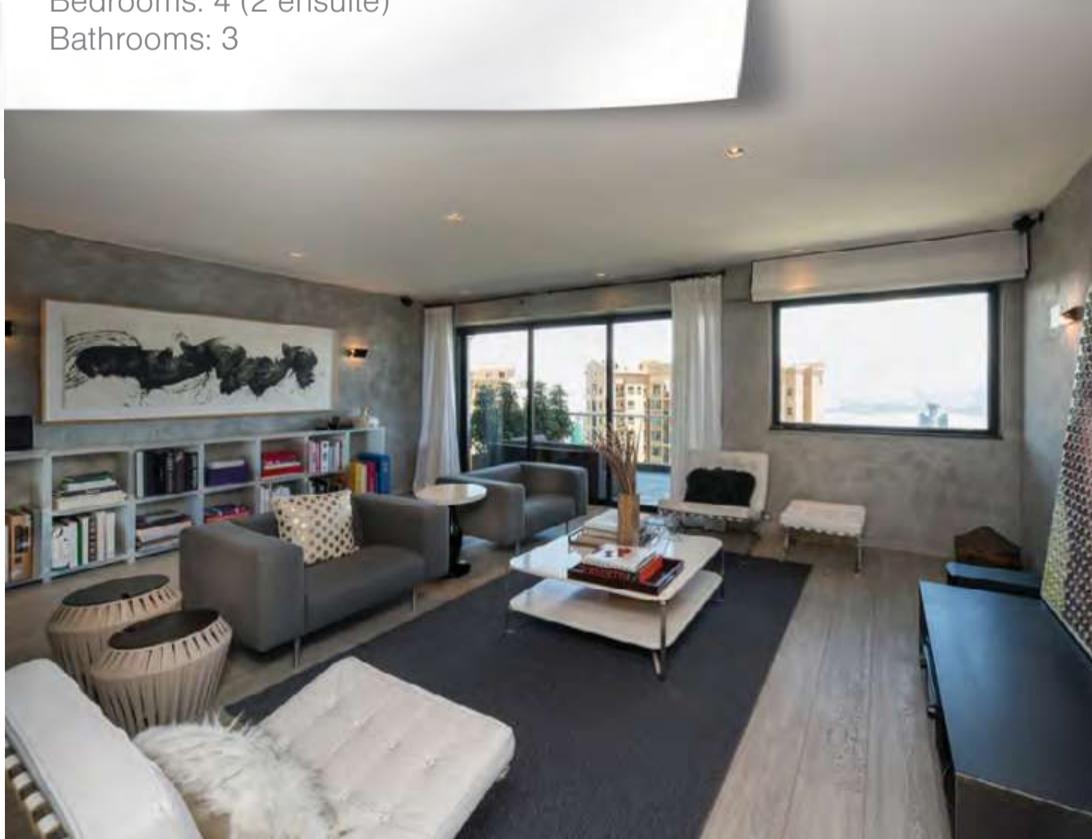
To conclude, we feel prices will remain at current stable levels. This is due to the imbalance between demand and supply. Rents will continue to rise. The residential market is supported by many factors such as low vacancy rate and no oversupply.

Hot Properties

PO SHAN MANSION

District: Mid-Levels West
Sale Price: HK\$62M
Size: 2,410 sq. ft
Bedrooms: 4 (2 ensuite)
Bathrooms: 3

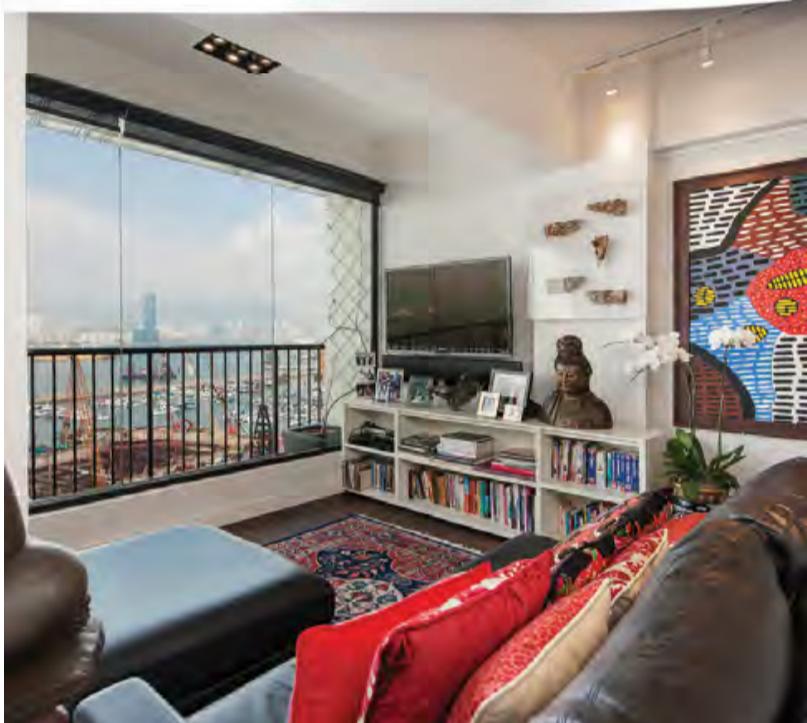
Located in a quiet area near the start of the Morning Trail to The Peak, this trendy, modern apartment has been created by well-known French interior designer Peggy Bels. Living-room doors open to enjoy the large balcony, and the property includes a covered car park.



To view properties, call Hong Kong Sotheby's International Realty at +852 3108 2108

HARBOURFRONT RESIDENCE

District: Causeway Bay
 Sale Price: HK\$14.5M
 Size: 624 sq. ft
 Bedrooms: 1
 Bathrooms: 1



This meticulously crafted, one-bedroom apartment in Causeway Bay boasts some extraordinary views of both the harbour and the city skyline. Vacant possession or leaseback option.



The entrance of this home welcomes you with a proper foyer, while the formal living room and elegant dining room provide plenty of space for entertaining guests. A large private terrace off the living room is great for alfresco dining.

MODERN ELEGANCE

District: Clearwater Bay
 Rent/Sale: Price upon request
 Size: 5,247 sq. ft
 Bedrooms: 3 (3)
 Bathrooms: 3.5

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SEA VISTAS

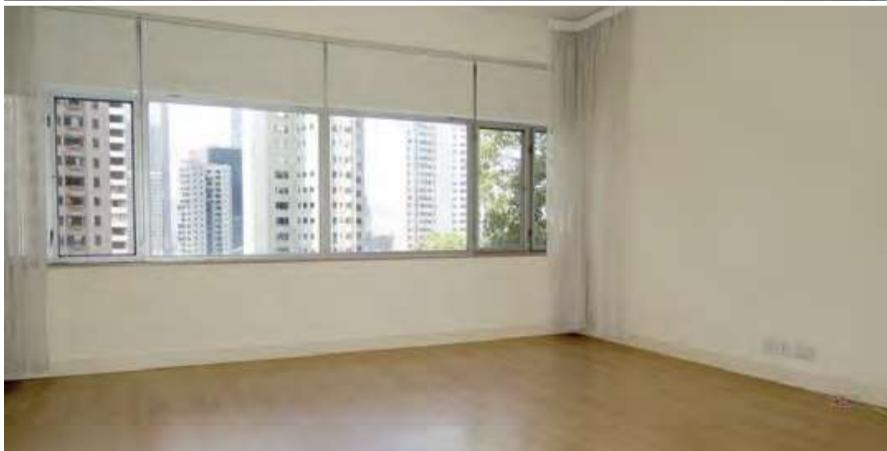
District: Pok Fu Lam
Rent/Sale: HK\$90K / HK\$40M
Size: 1,707 sq. ft
Bedrooms: 3 (1)
Bathrooms: 2

This is a bright and beautifully renovated three-bedroom flat whose highlights include amazing ocean views and a fantastic chef's kitchen for entertaining.



EXPANSIVE ROOMS

District: Mid-Levels Central
Rental Price: HK\$128K
Size: 2,145 sq. ft
Bedrooms: 4 (2)
Bathrooms: 3



Features of this colonial low-rise include the generous space and neutral décor, the modern fixtures in its updated kitchen and bathrooms, and the convenient Mid-Levels location.

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Life & Family



WHAT'S NEW

Something for all the family to enjoy



THE SOUND OF MUSIC

Starting in October, **Kidenza** will offer children the opportunity to explore music with the **Vienna Boys Choir Elementary Music Programme**. Suitable for children from age one, the programme engages kids in music appreciation through singing and the use of dance, instruments and listening. For older children (aged five to 11) with a love of singing, the Vienna Boys Choir Academy Choir Programme is also available. Shop 852-853, Level 8, Fortune Metropolis, 6 Metropolis Drive, Hung Hom. **2997 1393 | kidenza.hk** ▲

PARTY TIME!

Helping you to make your kids' birthdays more memorable, **Rumple and Friends** have released a whole new set of party themes – including pirates, cowboys, superheroes, safari, space, jungle, princesses and under-the-sea! All parties feature live performances, fun and magic, and special themed games for the children to play. Get in early to avoid disappointment – parties usually book up from four to six weeks in advance. 3/F, 148 Wing Lok Street, Sheung Wan.

9471 1192 | rumpleandfriends.com ▼





GETTING INTO CHARACTER

Whether you're after school supplies, a gift or some essentials for a little one in your life, **Monster Kid's** new stationery is sure to be a hit! Featuring backpacks and bags, lunch boxes, pencils, notebooks and more, the range features cute designs of family favourites like Maisy, Babapapa, and The Little Prince. Visit their two new shops in Central and stock up today – you might even find something for your own office. 2/F, Landmark Prince's Building, Central, and 7/F, vPlus, 68-70 Wellington Street, Central.

2110 4510
facebook.com/monsterkidhk



SATURDAY SCHOOL

Since the start of the new school year, **EtonHouse International Pre-School** has been hosting weekend workshops for families. Aimed at introducing families to the school's teachers and their bilingual approach, the sessions are free and run from 10am to 1pm. There are limited vacancies, so do register online in advance. Session details:

- Saturday, 10 October: The Language of Music
 - Saturday, 21 November: The Language of Storytelling and Puppetry
 - Saturday, 16 January: The Language of the Visual and Creative Arts
- LG/F, Kindergarten, Mayfair By The Sea I, 23 Fo Chun Road, Tai Po

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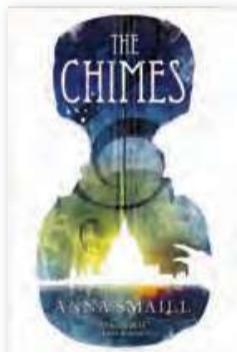


ON THE PAGE

Looking for a good read? Here's our monthly roundup of the written word.

New and notable books recommended by the team at Bookazine.

FICTION



THE CHIMES

Anna Small

Simultaneously original and beautiful, this book's future London is a city where music is everything, but memory and the written word are both lost and forbidden. With no new memories made, every day seems the same and the future is an unfathomable concept. But when Simon arrives seeking the truth of what happened to his parents, he discovers

his gift will change all this forever. An ambitious debut novel from the poet and violinist author, it's as mesmerising as it is unique.

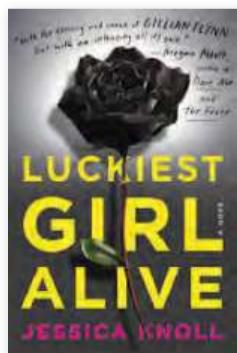


A SPOOL OF BLUE THREAD

Anne Tyler

From the Pulitzer Prize-winning author comes the wrenchingly joyful story of the Whitshank family. With Abby and Red getting older, their children come together to decide the fate of their parents and the house they lovingly built. Achingly real moments and eccentric yet fully realised individuals make this a perfect character study of all the intricacies

that make up a family.



LUCKIEST GIRL ALIVE

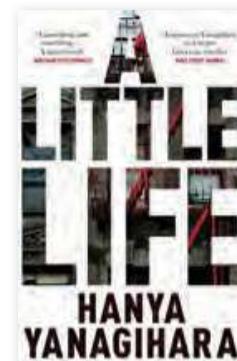
Jessica Knoll

Ani's nasty streak and cutthroat ambition have enabled her to become the girl that has it all: perfect job, perfect wardrobe and a perfect man of perfect breeding stock. But her perfect life is cracking with the secret of her traumatic past. Her next moves will seal her future, for better or worse. If you were hooked by the plot twists and unhinged characters of *Gone Girl* and *Girl On A Train*, here's your next read.

A LITTLE LIFE

Hanya Yanagihara

Brace yourself before you read this astonishing, challenging, brutally honest and deeply moving story about one man's past and how it affects the strong bonds with three of his friends. Jude St. Francis is a beautiful person and a brilliant lawyer, but he is broken and in pain, and his friends try desperately to protect his fragility with their love while having their own flaws. This epic novel will suck you into some dark places and it will break your heart. Consider yourself warned.

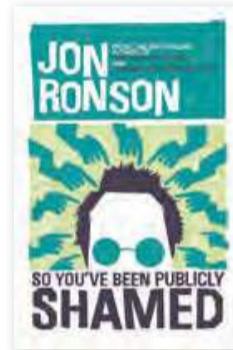


NON-FICTION

SO YOU'VE BEEN PUBLICLY SHAMED

Jon Ronson

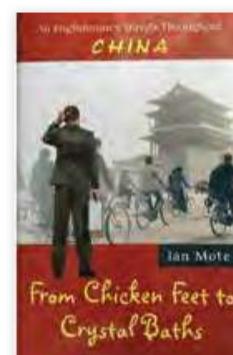
The author spent three years talking to people who were vilified for their actions or words through social media; the result is a fascinating exploration into how we shame each other in the modern world. Lives are torn apart for a minor or major mistake and this book shows us the role we play in it and asks if this is a form of social control masked as "justice by the people". On point and utterly eye-opening.



FROM CHICKEN FEET TO CRYSTAL BATHS

Ian Mote

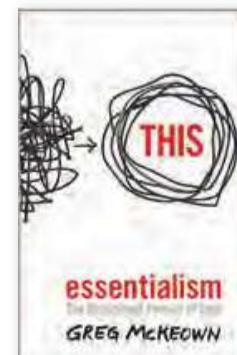
Crazy adventures and wild but true stories – when it comes to world travels, this Englishman has seen and done it all. Travel-lovers get an inside view of the sights, sounds, and flavours from every province in China. But more than just a travel memoir, it also exemplifies expatriate life in Asia, with all the highs, lows and differing cultural nuances that entails. An interesting read indeed.



ESSENTIALISM: THE DISCIPLINED PURSUIT OF LESS

Greg McKeown

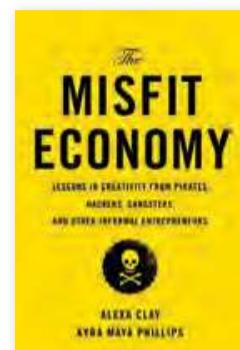
If you're feeling busy but unproductive, bogged down by other's agendas or simply stretched too thin, you might need to become an essentialist. According to McKeown, essentialism is living your life in such a way that all of your energies are wholly concentrated on accomplishing the vital few things that really matter and cutting away anything that is not. And this book will put you in a position where doing only the essential things becomes effortless.



MISFIT ECONOMY

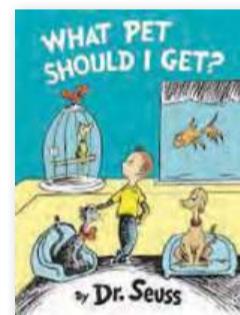
Alexa Clay & Kyra Maya Phillips

If you want genius examples of creativity, entrepreneurship, and innovation, forget Steve Jobs, Google and Silicon Valley. Instead, this book takes a look at those working on the outer fringes of society and business – the hustlers, the hackers, the gang leaders and the counterfeiters. With its thought-provoking stories of guts and ingenuity, you'll be inspired by these criminals and rebels to push through limits and see the act of innovation in a way you never would've before.

**KIDS****WHAT PET SHOULD I GET?**

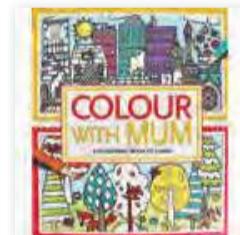
Dr. Seuss

This never-before-seen picture book by Dr. Seuss about making up one's mind is the literary equivalent of buried treasure. When a brother and sister visit a pet store, they quickly realise they can't choose just one animal! Told in the writer's signature rhyming style, this is a must-have for Seuss fans and book collectors; it also makes a perfect gift choice for the holidays, birthdays and happy occasions of all kinds.

**COLOUR WITH MUM**

Emily Golden Twomey

Colouring at any age has become a worldwide craze, and this book makes colouring the perfect opportunity for parents and their children to share in the fun together. The side-by-side images have varying degrees of difficulty, so you can decide between you who tackles which picture. A great way to spend quality time and easy bonding over a creative activity.



Find Bookazine outlets in various Hong Kong locations, including Shop 309, Landmark Prince's Building, 10 Chater Road, Central, and One Exchange Square, Shop 305/307, Central. bookazine.com.hk

WHAT ARE YOU READING?

To tell us what books are piled up on your bedside table, or what you've recently downloaded to your Kindle, dash off an email to editor@expatliving.hk. It won't take long!



Katie Roberts
Australian

ALL THE LIGHT WE CANNOT SEE, BY ANTHONY DOERR**Genre?**

Historical fiction

How did you get hold of it?

A kind friend recently delivered 10 books to my door while I was on medical leave. I checked a few reviews on Goodreads, and settled for this title.

How far have you got with it?

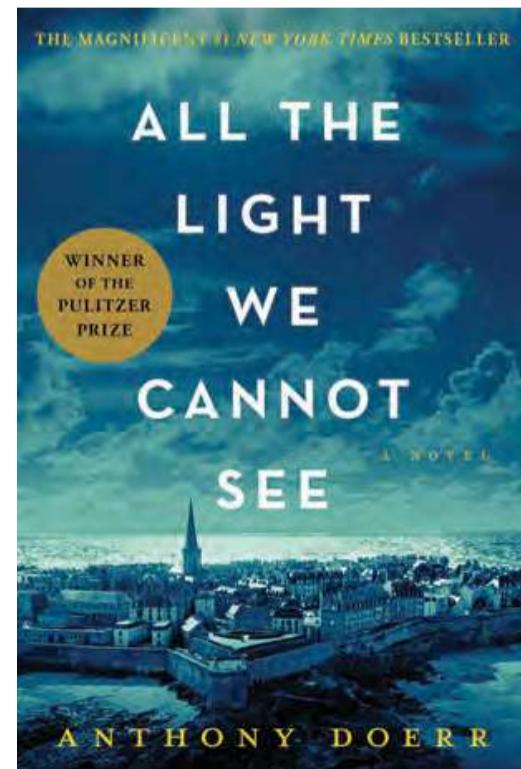
Finished it in three days – luckily I had the time to spare.

What do you think of it?

It won the 2015 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, and I can see why. The writing is beautiful, Anthony Doerr has an amazing turn of phrase and the plot had me enthralled.

Would you recommend it?

Absolutely. Set in Germany and France during World War II, the story is intriguing, the characters are beautifully constructed and the author's metaphors are sublime. Know that this book will consume you until the very end.





PICTURE PERFECT

Capturing frame-worthy images on camera takes more than just a click of the shutter. It requires skill, passion, patience and, sometimes, a bit of luck. We asked some of Hong Kong's leading portrait photographers to talk about a favourite image of theirs, and the hard work that goes on behind the lens with such a shot.

BETTITUDE PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTOGRAPHER: BETTY

info@bettitudephotography.com | bettitudephotography.com

This photo was taken in my studio as a one-year-old's celebration shoot. It was my third session with the family – a loyal customer of mine – after doing maternity and newborn photos for them.

Usually, before a session, I talk through styles with my client so I can get an idea what they're looking for. I always like to keep their requirements of content and feel in their brief, as this allows me more flexibility to keep an eye out for certain elements when I meet them in person for the shoot. Many clients who book me for photography are looking for memorable and classic family shots that will be long-lasting (that is, with a simple look, and not too many props in the set-up).

At the beginning of session, I help to build up the mood (particularly with the baby, because if the baby is happy, the parent is happy!), and I wait for the right moment to capture. As a baby's mood doesn't last long in general, once the moment is there, I'll take as many different angles and compositions as possible. To do this, I count on the full cooperation of the parents (usually they enjoy the fun and pace of a session, even if it can be exhausting). This photo was captured right after we put baby down and he smiled. Just a second later he turned his body around, away from my lens.

The image has been tuned up a bit with colour (via Photoshop), just to add some more vibrancy and energy. But this shot was more about the moment – the smile and the pose. The composition and angle were just right, and the picture looks unique to me, with a touch and character that are perfect. It also reflects my natural style.

Securing a great and memorable family picture is a must for me, regardless of the location of the session – in a studio, on location, or at a client's home – or the style of the session – newborn, infant, maternity or family portraits.

Aside from all the family photography, I also do underwater photography. I'm a diving maniac!

CLAIRE WOODROW PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTOGRAPHER: CLAIRE
5184 5444 | clairewoodrow.com

“

Choosing a favourite image always seems like an impossible task, and it really leaves me conflicted. I'm incredibly grateful that my job is also something that I'm genuinely passionate about and to have such wonderfully warm and beautiful clients. As such, so many images are 'favourites' and really do make me smile. How can I possibly choose between them?

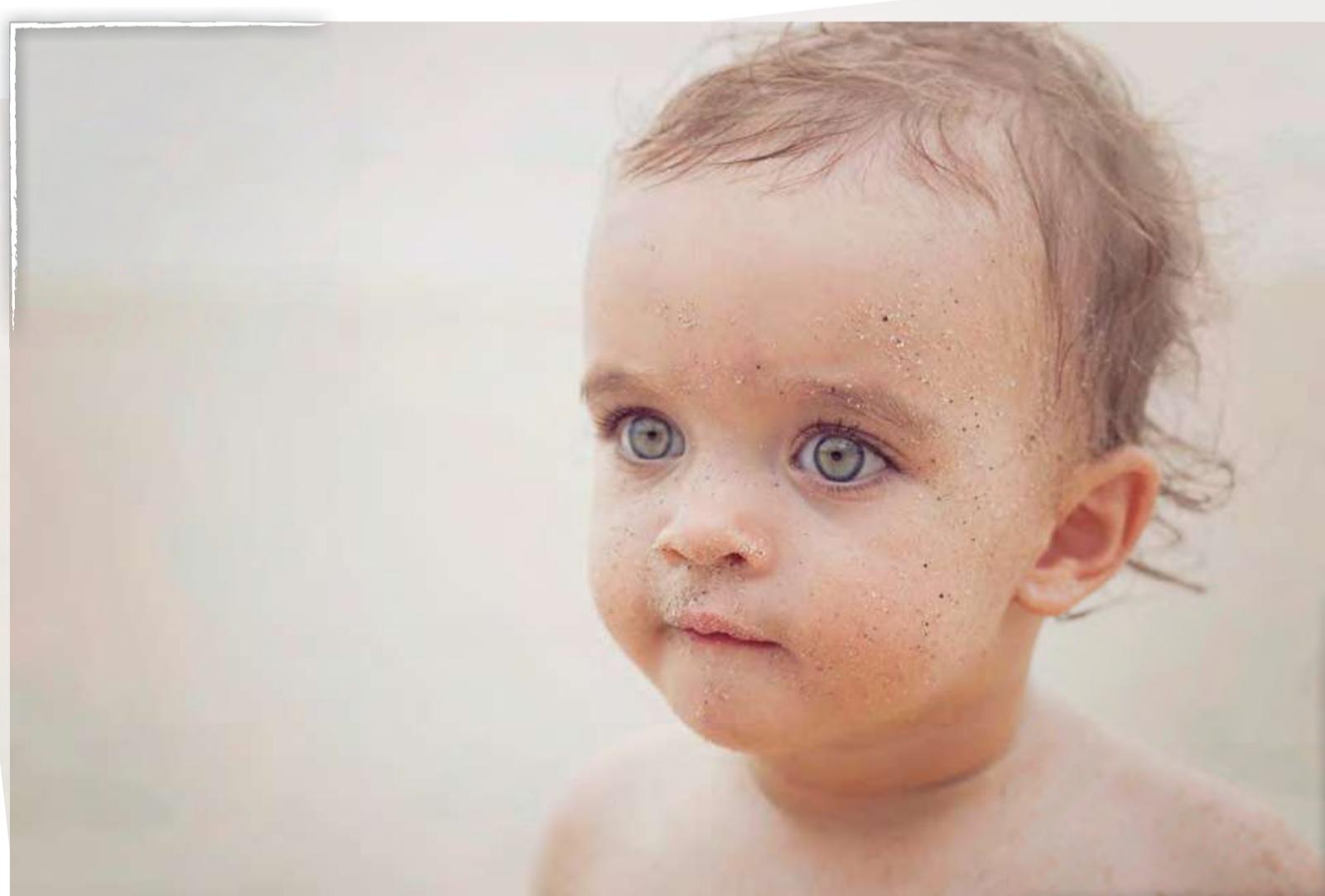
Having said that, I'm very fond of outdoor shoots: the abundant natural light, freedom of space, and the opportunity to run around and explore, which gives the subjects' personalities a chance to really shine through. This particular shot just happens to be my favourite subject too: my two-year-old daughter, Nell. It was taken last year in Thailand on the first (very) sunny morning after heavy rain had battered the island for days. So of course we just had to hit the beach.

I just love how this shot really captures her little personality. She's a real thinker and weighs up every situation before cautiously making a move. This is just one of those moments where she's frozen, deep in calm contemplation, where moments earlier she'd been madly throwing herself around

in the sand, loving how she was making her grandparents (who had come to visit) burst with laughter.

The shot was taken in the midday sun (usually a big no-no!) battling very strong light that would've made a shot of the surrounding landscape too stark and unflattering. I used my favourite macro lens here, on a very low ISO setting, which allowed me to open up the aperture to focus in on her features. I love how the light surrounds her and allows her eyes to pop, while the grains of sand gorgeously freckle her otherwise perfectly flawless baby skin. There was very little processing work done on this image as I wanted to maintain a natural look; I just added a touch of warmth to combat the starkness of the sun, and a light vignette to gently soften the edges.

This image is typical of my relaxed and organic style, utilising soft and natural light while capturing warm and 'real' moments. Whether I'm photographing children, families, newborns, bumps or parties, I don't feel images have to be overly smiley and joyous (though that's obviously lovely too), just natural, warm and true to the moment and the subject's personality.



DIVI PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTOGRAPHER: DIVI
diviphotography.com



This image was taken in Causeway Bay for a family who wanted some images that were quintessentially Hong Kong. This particular area was very special to them, and they were eager for their family portrait to reflect that.

In order to capture the 'perfect' shot, we had to time it so that we had buses and taxis in the background, while also waiting for the crowds crossing the road to pass; it's a very busy area, so we tried quite a few times, but we got there in the end!

I love this image as there are so many obvious and subtle nuances of the city: from the bus signs and taxis to the yellow zebra crossing and high rises; also, the family looks very natural and relaxed. The accents of colour in the black & white image highlight the most striking and important details without being too obvious.

At Divi Photography, we specialise in timeless, classical styles of maternity and newborn photography, as well as family shoots around Hong Kong like this one. Special packages and vouchers are available on our website.





GABRIELLE CHURCHOUSE PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTOGRAPHER: GABRIELLE
3691 8268 | gabriellechurchousephotography.com

“

This photo was part of a commissioned studio family-sitting, with a range of different shots.

I'm not sure if any shot is ever perfect. With this RAW image, we started with basic editing, first in Adobe Lightroom and then in Photoshop, for texture smoothing and blemish removal.

Of course, shooting in RAW offers amazing possibilities. Before we went digital some years ago we had shot well over 500,000 rolls of negative film (all archived) with little or no opportunity to change anything.

As usual, we had a meeting before the sitting to test skin tone and plan the photographs. The skin tone test allows us to advise each person on what shades to wear to enable their face to 'pop' in the photographs.

The photo makes me smile, and it captures the family enjoying their time together. It's important to capture both fun and classic images in a sitting, preferably 'high key' and 'low key'.

We also produce archival prints (on Hahnemühle paper using archival inks) from sittings, and we have a service whereby we edit and print clients' own photographs, providing sterling silver and lacquer standing frames and gift-wrapping. We also do interiors and travel photography.

PHOTOTSUNIC STUDIO

PHOTOGRAPHER: KEITH
9269 7471 | phototsunic-studio.com

“

I took this photo when I was bathing my elder daughter, Haydence, when she was 10 months old. I captured her at a joyful moment when she was indulging in her bath, which is also our special time together.

It's really important to understand the personality of the subject matter – and what they like. That's why, before I take any shoot for clients, I like talking to parents to understand the personality and preferences of their babies. I will also spend time to observe the baby and his or her interaction with parents. I will then create a shot that reflects the baby's most natural and genuine emotions. For this shot, the concept was created based on my understanding of my daughter's indulgence in water.

I like the photo a lot as the baby's happiness is so genuine and her smile so contagious. She was just in heaven as I played with her, and I captured her sweetest and most innocent expression. A lot of clients of mine have also told me that they really love this photo.

In addition to baby and family photography, another side of my specialty is corporate, lifestyle and documentary photography. My corporate clients have included Cartier, Sotheby, Swire and Alibaba, and I've done portraits for famous fashion designer Vivienne Westwood, architect Frank Gehry, public figure Donald Tsang and celebrity Andy Lau.





SUZANNE GOODWIN PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTOGRAPHER: SUZANNE
9025 3949 | suzannegoodwinphotography.com

“

This photo was taken on Tong Fuk Beach, South Lantau, just down the road from where I live; the family is also local to the area. They were expecting their second child and wanted to have some memories of the three of them together, while capturing the baby bump as well. We ended up getting 20 or more great photos and they were thrilled.

There are many reasons why this photo is a favourite of mine. Light is the most important technical component in all my photography, and this photo shows the value of shooting in the ‘magic hour’. The sun was low, and I used the sunset for backlight to create warmth and set the mood. I used a fast shutter speed for crispness, and opened up the aperture to let in the glow of the light. It was shot in November, one of the best months for outdoor photography in Hong Kong – not too hot or humid. I study the light in the early mornings and late afternoons and know just when the best times are to head out. The window for shots is only about an hour, so you have to be smart and know your setting.

Location is another key factor. I know that this beach is quieter than many on South Lantau, so there are unlikely to be strangers in the way or in the background. Children love being out and running on the beach, so it creates a natural and happy result every time.

This shot is very typical of my photography. I love family photography, and people often want to get photos done for Christmas time; so November on the beach is perfect. It’s a big trip to South Lantau if you’re not a local, but I encourage people to make the journey as the rewards are plentiful.

I don’t have a studio and take almost all my photos with natural light, whether indoors or out. I can set up a simple mini-studio in a client’s house for the times of the year when the weather isn’t great for being out and about, or for newborn baby sessions, which are more popular to be shot indoors. I also shoot corporate events or casual gatherings, and maternity, newborn and wedding photography.



JACK LUI

PHOTOGRAPHER: JACK

jackjack@jackluiphoto.com | jackluiphoto.com

“

I wanted to create the mood and feel of a mother enjoying a quiet moment with her baby-in-tummy, surrounded by the warm sunlight in a magical forest. She's listening and feeling the little movements of the baby inside. No one can disturb them in this God-created wonderland.

The picture was taken in a park in Sai Kung. It's a perfect location with lots of the forest backdrop at my imagination's disposal. It was late afternoon for this shot, and the sun was at the perfect angle, casting a golden light on the woods. I did very minimal post-editing – only a little lighting and colour enhancement. With the right angle at the right time, you can get this magical effect – a growing subject in a magically lit woods.

For me, photography is like painting with lights. For example, creating a warm and comfortable feeling is important for a maternity shoot, so it's essential to get the right sunlight – the woods can't look dark and creepy. In this case, with just a little direction, we got the mother in the right mood and right pose. The magic happened!

I do wedding photography, magazine editorials, fashion shoots, commercials and more. But I specialise more in location and outdoor shooting. Whenever a client comes to me for a portrait session, I suggest a location shoot first.

'Alice in Wonderland' is a concept I've had in mind for a while. When Courtney approached me for an outdoor maternity shoot, this idea immediately came to mind! I love to bring my clients to a special location showcasing something unique. There are always challenges when you're in nature; but it's also a time when you have to trust your photographer, and let his or her creativity fly!

HONEY CHILD PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTOGRAPHER: TRACEY

honeychild@hotmail.com.hk | facebook.com/honeychildphotographyhk

These are photos from sessions that two families booked with me – one booked a family lifestyle session and the other a newborn session.

The lifestyle session was less about posing and more about capturing the emotions and interactions among the family members.

Newborn sessions are my signature; in these photo shoots, I aim at posing a newborn baby so that he or she is almost like a work of art – in this way the image is praising the arrival of this new life. The ‘curl’ of a baby’s body as it sleeps gives a real sense of the preciousness of a newborn. As a viewer, you think ‘Life is just amazing!'

Any lifestyle session requires a lot of interaction from the family members. This is often a natural thing – it comes from within. It allows for the capture of beautiful photos during moments when they are chitchatting, playing, and just having fun with each other.

A newborn shoot is different: it needs a perfect mix and match of great colours and lighting. It's also a core part of the shoot to ‘babysit’ the baby, allowing them to pose at ease, and then making the photo shoot happen.

These pictures demonstrate the various elements that my photography exhibits: a natural feel, plenty of warmth and sweetness, and lots of emotion. The newborn picture demonstrates the technique of capturing a baby in a pose that makes it feel more like a piece of art. ☺





Made for You

By Brooke Chenoweth

When it comes to choosing an engagement ring or a special gift, a bespoke piece is a natural choice. For the uninitiated, it may seem overwhelming; but working with a reputable jeweller like **Haywards** turns the experience into something exciting and personal.

There is something quite special about having a piece of jewellery custom-made. From the dream to the drawings to receiving the finished piece in its own little box, there's a feeling of giddy anticipation that can't be bought off-the-shelf in a standard jewellers.

I have two rings that are bespoke, so I know the process well. I never take them off, and I get a great deal of pleasure out of knowing that they were designed by me, and handcrafted for me – there are no two rings exactly like these anywhere else in the world, and that makes them very precious.

Starting from scratch

Whether you want to create something unique or you just like the thought of working with a jeweller to custom-make a piece of jewellery, every piece starts with an idea. Some people choose a bespoke

jeweller because they have very specific ideas about what they want. Others know they want a necklace or something with rubies, but aren't clear on the design.

In either case, DAVID NAZER and his team at Haywards can help you to develop your ideas and advise you on everything from choosing stones to settings – they even know a thing or two about perfect proposals.

Once you've created a design and chosen your stones, the craftsmen at Haywards take over. Depending on how intricate the work is, and the size and style of your piece, the process can take three to four weeks. This level of personalisation takes time, so, if you're buying a gift for a special occasion, it's important to bear that in mind. With Christmas just a couple of months away, this is particularly relevant!

David says, "Having something custom-made should be enjoyable. It's as

much about the experience of designing the product as it is about the final piece."

And you needn't feel like you can only use a bespoke jeweller for large and expensive pieces; it is possible to customise something as simple as earrings, and the team can help you work within your budget.

Everything old is new again

A lesser-known element of the work David and his team do is reconstruction – taking existing pieces of jewellery or stones and turning them into something completely new and unique. This kind of work takes just as much time and effort as a bespoke creation, and requires a consideration for the sentimental value attached to a once precious piece of jewellery – something that's rare in Hong Kong. The team at Haywards has worked with clients who were engaged when they were very young and years later decided to update their engagement rings, and others who inherited old-fashioned pieces of jewellery from family members and who seek to give these gems new life as stunning, timeless heirlooms.



PAUL DOUGLAS set David and his team the challenge of finding a champagne peach sapphire for his wife Brooke's engagement ring. Here he answers our questions about the experience:

What made you decide to go bespoke rather than buying a ring off the shelf?

A couple of things swayed the decision to bespoke. My wife is simple yet elegant in her tastes. A lot of off-the-shelf designs I was seeing here didn't really fit into those criteria. Also, having a point of contact to walk you through the process as a gentleman, is most helpful.

How much detail did Brooke give you about what she wanted?

Brooke didn't hint at it at all, but she has Pinterest boards where she posts her likes. She had only mentioned in the past that she didn't need a huge diamond and one or two of her posts had champagne sapphires. I set David the challenge and, despite the fact that he specialises in diamonds, he accepted.

Did you have any clue about the design she would like?

I had chosen the centrepiece stone, but David and his design team came back with some great and crucial suggestions. The small diamonds encircling the sapphire really draw attention to it. Also, they suggested that while the ring would look nice as white gold, the setting should be rose gold to bring out a subtle pinkish tone. The suggestions really worked.

How did you find the experience of having something bespoke made? Have you had anything else made by Haywards since?

The experience was a pleasure. We had our wedding rings made by Haywards and we are very pleased with those as well. Would I go back again for anything else? Well, I wouldn't want to give anything away, in case my wife is reading...

FELICE MARSHALL inherited her grandmother's diamond engagement ring as a family heirloom. She decided to have it reconstructed after her grandmother passed away. Felice says:

"The diamond was set in a gold ring. I decided to have it reconstructed around the time of my 40th birthday – it was not only a 40th birthday present (rubies are my birthstone), but also a 'push present' (my son was born in April 2013, and his birthstone is diamonds).

I really had no idea what I wanted other than I wanted to use my grandmother's diamond in a meaningful way. Katie Kay, a previous employee of Haywards and a very good friend, took me in to do the redesign. Haywards came up with three designs for me, and I immediately loved the one I now have. There was very little creative input from me.

I absolutely love it; it's definitely a 'show stopper', and whenever I wear it I always get remarks on what a beautiful ring it is. I take great pleasure in telling the story of its significance. It's a treasured and special piece of jewellery to me, and one that I will hand down to my daughter and future generations to come."



Haywards of Hong Kong is at
233 Hollywood Road.
2545 4400 | haywards.com.hk



STYLE HUNTER

This month, personal stylist ELLEN LOBLER shares her tips on how to look chic throughout a pregnancy – yes, it's possible!

Many mums-to-be don't spend much money on maternity wear as they figure they will only be able to put it to use for a few months; but even if you don't get a lot of wear out of your outfits, it's still nice to look the part!

Here, then, are five tips for a stylish pregnancy:

- 1 Avoid loose clothing. Form-fitting pieces are much more flattering – show off that bump!
- 2 Wear block colours for a nice silhouette, but be careful with satin materials or very unforgiving, loud patterns.
- 3 Invest in a pair of maternity leggings – they'll come in handy worn under tunics.
- 4 Invest in a pair of maternity skinny jeans for the stretch waistband!
- 5 *Insider tip:* Check out empire-style tops and tunics in regular shops; they can be ideal transitional items for the period when you are bigger than normal but not big enough for maternity wear.

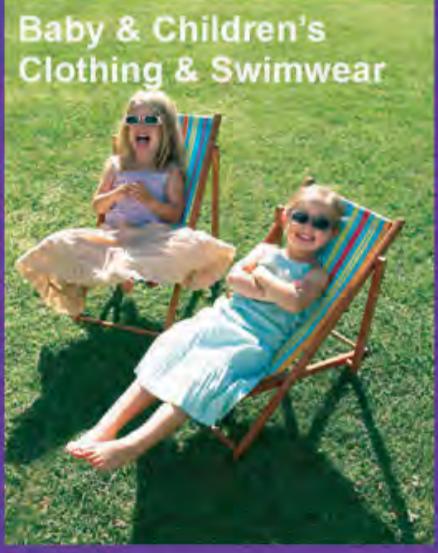
Model: DEB WOODLEY-PAGE
From: Australia
Profession: Voice-over artist
Photos: Anna Bowkis Photography



Ellen is a Dutch stylist and personal shopper in Hong Kong, and writes about the latest trends for stylebyasia.com. loblerdelaney.com



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Sai Kung Store G/F 7 Wan King Path, Sai Kung, New Territories **T:** 2976 0223

www.bumpstobabes.com

www.facebook.com/bumpstobabeshk





The **Prestige Christmas Gift Fairs**, a one-stop shop for buying Christmas presents, is on again in the Grand Ballroom of the Conrad Hong Kong (9 and 25 November, and 1 and 14 December; 10am to 8pm). Each year, thousands of Hong Kong shoppers make the fairs the most popular in town, and this is especially true of the expat community. Hundreds of local designers and entrepreneurs will be offering the latest in designer jewellery, fashion, homeware and lifestyle products, along with children's and babies' wear, toys, Christmas decorations, chocolates, gourmet food and wine, and more. For a taste of what to expect, here are some highlights from selected vendors.

④ LBB Asia

"Not every wine is a Grand Cru; the same is true for perfumes." The Grands Crus collection is designed around the themes of travel and raw materials: each Grands Crus Cologne reveals the interpretation of a region of the world in a fragrance, created by the raw materials that nature offers. ibbasia.com

Participating date: 1 Dec



④ Sally Sachet

Don't miss this stall for handmade fabric, cosmetic and accessory bags by local designer and seamstress Sally. facebook.com/sallyssachet
Participating date: 14 Dec



④ Les Hans

Fancy and unique seasonal decoration handmade by skilful workers with traditional techniques, to add an extra memorable touch to your Christmas. leshanshk.com

Participating dates: 9 Nov, 25 Nov, 1 Dec



④ Unico J & I

Unico J & I's Italian food and beverage offerings include Italian wines, proactively scouted from boutique producers in Tuscany and other regions. Their range of wines for Hong Kong-based customers is continuously updated, so be sure to discover what's on their shelves. unicoji.com.hk

Participating date: 9 Nov



④ Lightfoot Travel

Lightfoot Travel is a luxury tour operator specialising in designer holidays to countries spanning the seven continents of the world. They take pride in the

originality of their trips, so that a holiday with Lightfoot is guaranteed to be inspired, inventive, and perfectly tailored to suit your needs. lightfoottravel.com

Participating date: 9 Nov, 1 Dec



④ 13th Element

Contemporary and iconic images of Hong Kong mounted on aluminium, canvas and photographic paper, or available as unique gifts including coffee mugs, coasters, wine glass identifiers, charms and Christmas ornaments. 13thelement.net

Participating dates: 9 Nov, 25 Nov, 1 Dec



⑤ Pinstripe Interiors

Hammamas are beautiful lightweight towels inspired by *pestamei* towels, essential in the traditional Turkish hammam bath. Perfect holiday and travel towels that double as beach wrap and sarong, Hammamas also make stunning bath towels; they're super-absorbent, lightweight and fast-drying. Choose from a kaleidoscope of vibrant colours. pinstripeinteriors.com

Participating dates: 9 Nov, 25 Nov, 1 Dec

⑥ Lotus Gallery

Beautiful handmade handbags and clutches made from genuine leather and exotic skins, along with great gift ideas such as iPhone cases, belts and wallets. lotusgallery.com.hk

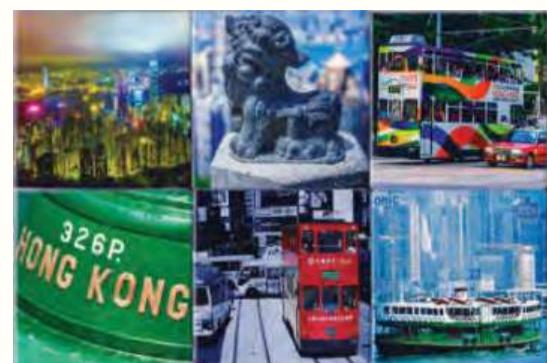
Participating dates: 25 Nov, 14 Dec



⑦ eden & zoe

This cashmere and cotton knitwear brand offers luxurious products including clothing, accessories and blankets for newborn babies up to children age 10. edenandzoe.com

Participating date: 1 Dec



⑧ Art Affairs

Art Affairs is a boutique art agency based in Hong Kong that carefully selects and represents established and up-and-coming artists from Europe. One of these is Karin Olofsson, a witty, lively and intriguing textile artist from Sweden. Her artworks are a distinctive combination of reality and fantasy that appeal to a broad audience and are fun for all ages. art-affairs.com

Participating date: 1 Dec



⑨ Allure Living

Don't want traditional Christmas ornaments? Why not go for something completely different – like these simple yet stylish Danish decorations. Use neutral looks with prevailing gold and copper minimal ornaments to compose a contemporary focal point in your living area. facebook.com/allureliving

Participating date: 1 Dec



⑩ Lea James Purse Organizers

Ever get frustrated looking in your purse for your phone, keys or other daily necessities? Fashionable and functional, the Lea James Purse Organizer insert keeps all your essentials organised and quickly accessible. Every fashionista knows that a handbag has to match an outfit; now, switching handbags is easier than ever. And no more fumbling frantically for a ringing cell phone! leajamespurseorganizers.com

Participating dates: 25 Nov, 1 Dec, 14 Dec



↑ **Gusella**

This historic Italian brand has been making fine children's shoes for over 80 years. Since the opening of the first shop in Via Spadari, Milan, Gusella has combined technology and fashion to offer parents award-winning, beautiful shoes for their children. Celebrated patrons have included Princess Grace Kelly of Monaco and her daughter Princess Caroline, and a whole generation of Milanese children. Now available in Hong Kong at Lee Gardens.

gusella.com

Participating date: 14 Dec

↑ **The Artist - Artisan Chocolatier Craft Brewer**

Craft brewer and chocolatier The Artist offers a unique home-delivery service of delicious customised Belgian chocolates and craft beers to Hong Kong. As creative as they are delicious, this range of artisan treats allows customers to use their own photos to customise beer labels and chocolate toppings – the perfect treat for gifts and special occasions. mrtheartist.com

Participating date: 14 Dec



↑ **Rice (Hong Kong) Ltd.**

Shop at Rice for tableware, home decor, housewares, furniture, gifts and more – including the “Colour Frantic” range: German crafted porcelain cups in over 40 different colours. Perfects gifts for coffee and tea enthusiasts and anyone who appreciates fine things for the home.

facebook.com/RiceHongKong

Participating dates: 1 Dec, 14 Dec

↑ **Findings Group**

Perfect for the young or the young at heart, these LEGO Watches feature character favourites like Yoda, Darth Vader, Batman, Superman, Olivia and Stephanie. findingsgroup.com

Participating dates: 1 Dec, 14 Dec



↑ **Fiona Paton Design**

Art trays are a cool way to turn kids' artwork into amazing gifts – a huge step up from a magnet on the fridge! You can change the art whenever it suits, and, with eight tray colours, there's something to fit any interior. There's a bespoke service available too, in which a professional photographer edits, crops and prints your images onto archival paper, then mounts them into the tray for you. Stylish and sentimental, they make perfect gifts.

fionapatondesign.com

Participating dates:

25 Nov, 1 Dec



↑ **Dawn Sonata Music Jewelry**

Founder Dawn Law believes that music can not only be listened to, but it can also be seen, touched and felt, with a little imagination. Dawn Sonata Music Jewelry specialises in high-quality, hand-crafted jewellery with 100 percent original designs inspired by music. Products are made with natural semi-precious gemstones, fresh water pearls, Swarovski crystals, silver, and finest quality copper fibre (coated with silver of a quality higher than silver 925). dsmjewelry.com

Participating date: 1 Dec



THE GIFT AND LIFESTYLE FAIR:

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Patchworks Collection
All Wool W/Natural Dyes

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Baby Essentials



1. Bear rattle, HK\$122, **Monster Kid**, 2110 4510, facebook.com/monsterkidhk **2.** Crib lights and sound entertainer, \$475, **Monster Kid** **3.** Teething ring teddy bear, \$116, **Monster Kid** **4.** Mouse and Strawberry doudou, \$231, **Monster Kid** **5.** Moses basket complete with coverlet and wipe-clean foam mattress, \$849, **Mothercare**, 2627 0035, mothercare.com.hk



6. Darlington cot and dresser, **Mothercare**, 2627 0035, mothercare.com.hk
7. Mamas & Papas Juice High Chair, available in teal or pink, converts from high chair to handy toddler chair, **Bumps to Babes**, 2552 5000, bumpstobabes.com
8. Baby Carrier One, newborn to three years, \$1,550, **Baby Bjorn**, available in all major baby stores, babybjorn.com **9.** Personalised jumpsuits, 100 percent cotton in short or long sleeves, from \$219, **Stuck on You**, 2549 2245, stuckonyou.hk
10. Musical star and angel, \$430, **Petit Bazaar**, 2528 0229, petit-bazaar.com
11. Grosnug, available in Light and Cosy for different room temperatures, from \$249, **Bloom & Grow**, 3283 3253, bloomandgrowasia.com **12.** Musical playmat, \$1,980, **Petit Bazaar**



13. Personalised height charts, from \$399, **Stuck on You** **14. & 20** Stelatopia Range, formulated for eczema-prone dry skin in babies and children, from \$106, **Mustela**, 2525 3591, mustela.hk **15.** Crocheted car bells, \$490, **Petit Bazaar** **16.** Mamas & Papas Starlight Swing, **Bumps to Babes** **17.** Blossom Bashful Bunny, \$390, **Petit Bazaar** **18.** BabyZen YoYo stroller, from \$3,999, **BabyZen**, babyzen.com **19.** XSS lightweight and ultra-compact stroller with carrier bag, fits aeroplane overhead compartment, \$1,799, **Mothercare**

Preschool Focus:

Making a Choice

Choosing a school for your first child can be tricky, but when you find the right one your child will shine, as YEN-YEN LIM and JOHN WONG discovered after sending their daughter Jaylea to **Woodland Sai Kung Pre-School**.

66

Jaylea was born in May 2012 and has been attending Woodland Sai Kung Pre-School since she was 18 months old. We did apply to other kindergarten schools for her and she was accepted, but we decided to let her stay at Woodland.

This is the first time I've chosen a school for my daughter. There were lots of options, including local government schools, local private schools and international schools. In the beginning, as I tried to learn from friends about the education system in Hong Kong, it all sounded very confusing. We looked into various online sources of information, including some social groups and forums, and we also continued talking to many friends with experience.

At first, we were only looking at international preschools that were close to where we live; we didn't want Jaylea to travel far at her age. We're lucky that Woodland was the closest school to our home – it only takes us five minutes to get there in the morning.

The loving teachers and the whole ambience at Woodland really helped Jaylea settle in to school. The teachers really matter; Jaylea learns a lot more because they make the whole learning process inspiring and fun. For example, she remembers the names of the planets in the solar system because she has learnt a song about them. She might not know every letter of the alphabet yet, but we know that her general knowledge is better than many other kids of the same age. Jaylea always asks a lot of questions – for example, "Why is it raining?" and "How does a car move?" – and her teachers are always ready to answer. Her relationship with her teachers gives her the confidence to speak her mind and ask questions. She's always inspired to learn.

Aside from location and teacher-pupil relationship, we value the communication between the school and parents. The Head of School and teachers are always open to communicating. Aside from Jaylea's development, they've always made time for me when I've asked them for advice, especially about primary school selection for Jaylea in the future.



Woodland Sai Kung Pre-School is at Shop D, G/F, Marina Cove Shopping Centre, Sai Kung. 2813 0290 | woodlandschools.com

Joanna Hotung – Educator

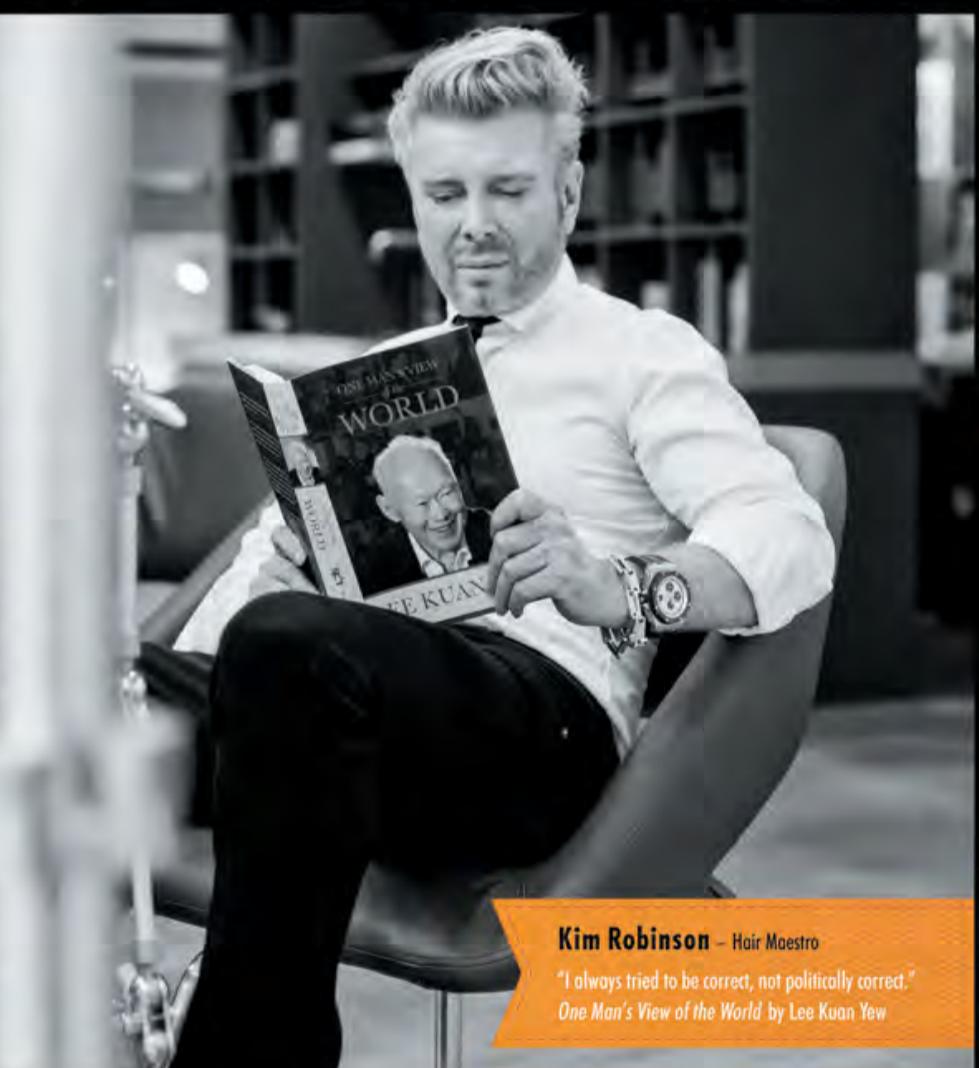
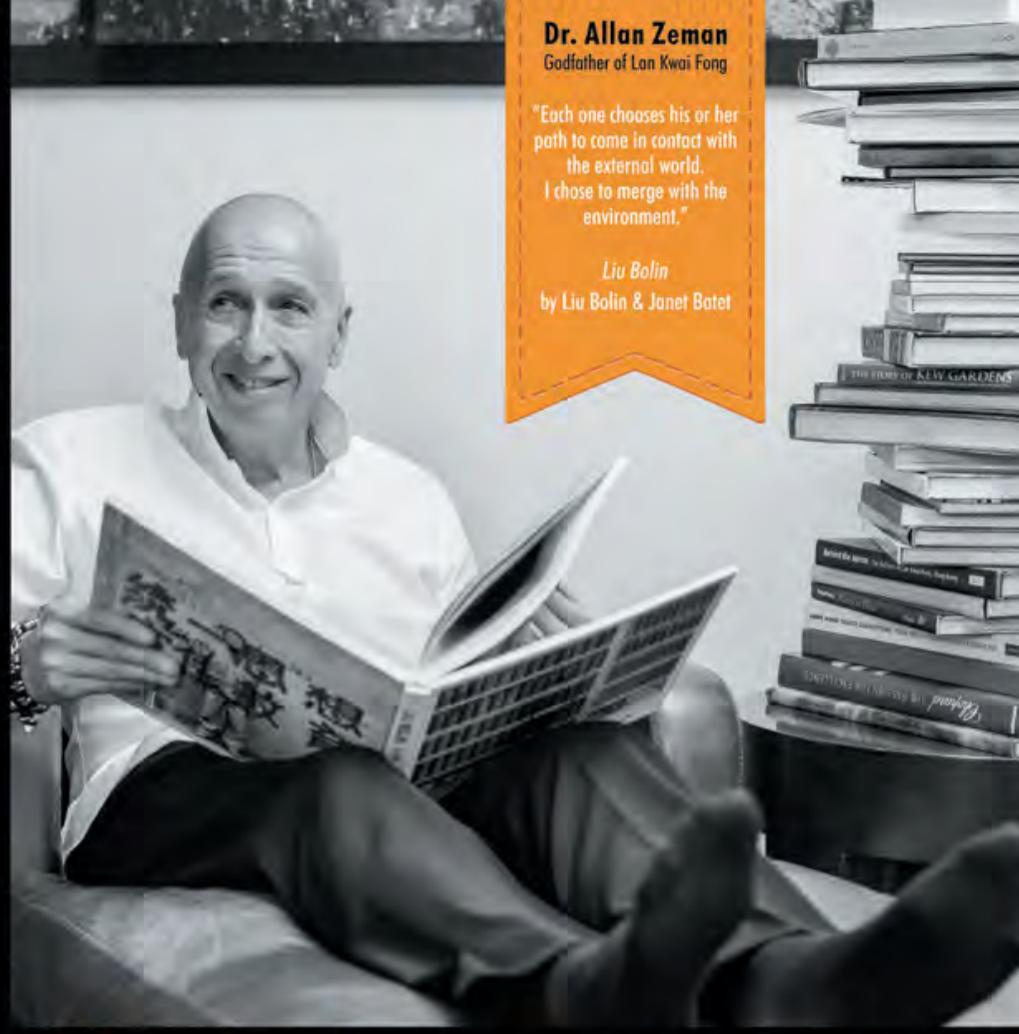
"I roused myself from the book which I was dreaming over rather than reading."

The Woman in White by Wilkie Collins

Dr. Allan Zeman
Godfather of Lon Kwai Fong

"Each one chooses his or her path to come in contact with the external world.
I chose to merge with the environment."

Liu Bolin
by Liu Bolin & Janet Batet



Kim Robinson – Hair Maestro

"I always tried to be correct, not politically correct."

One Man's View of the World by Lee Kuan Yew

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Got *MILK?*

Milk: it's such a staple in many diets, but local forums are filled with questions from concerned mums on where to buy it, which brands are best, and fresh versus UHT, so it's obvious that it's less straightforward than simply popping to the shops to buy a carton. We met with BEN and NATALIE HARRIS from **Daioni**, who want to make the choice a little easier.



Looking at press images from Daioni, you could be forgiven for thinking they must be staged for advertising purposes. But those happy, healthy cows and green fields really are from the Daioni farm in Wales. And those happy, healthy children are Ben and Natalie's own offspring – and Daioni's biggest fans.

While the farm in Wales has been in the family for many years, Ben's dad decided to try something new back in the late nineties; he went through the intense process of turning the farm organic. The motivation was to offer consumers a premium product, and with Ben and Natalie living in Hong Kong, the move into the export market was a natural next step.

Ben talks proudly of what his dad has achieved, and says he's not just another businessman; "He's a farmer and he can actually talk about milking and the practicalities of life on a farm." In an era where everyone is concerned about the origin of their food, it's refreshing to find a producer who is so hands-on, and that really shows in the quality of the product.



The Daioni farm meets the very strict organic standards set in the UK, and all of their milk is packaged there before being shipped quite quickly after processing. Once it arrives in Hong Kong, it's distributed to supermarkets around the city. Daioni is the milk of choice at Pret A Manger stores citywide, and its flavoured milks for kids can now be found at the Football Club (they're also the perfect size for lunchboxes).

The three-year-old milk connoisseur in my household was quite taken with the chocolate flavour – his response was "Mmm, delicious!" It's pretty incredible to think that those happy, healthy cows in Wales can produce a high-quality organic product that we can enjoy here in Hong Kong. The fact that it passes the taste test is an added bonus!

The ABC of UHT

Exporting fresh milk can be a tricky process, and many of us have had the unpleasant experience of getting fresh milk home only to find it's already turned – a victim of HK's heat and long transit times. So, UHT is generally preferred by exporters and many consumers. But is it any good for you? Ben explains: "The UHT process removes the live cultures from the milk, but the nutritional value of UHT and fresh is almost identical. The taste is slightly different but the key is starting off with a better product, and organic milk is definitely better."

To find out more about Daioni products, visit daioni.co.uk.

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Agents of Inspiration

Art Affairs, a new boutique art agency established this year by MARLEEN WALZ and LINNEA HAMEED, represents carefully selected European artists. We spoke to them about the upcoming Asia Contemporary Art Show (ACAS), and the two Swedish artists they're bringing over for the event.

As an art agency, what do you do?

We're essentially a management company. Art Affairs works behind the scenes to develop our artists' exposure and reputations within the Asian market. This gains the artist precious production time and allows them to further submerge themselves in their creations. We take pride in our artists and are honoured to be the first to present their works in Asia.

What's coming up next?

Art Affairs will be showcasing during the Asia Contemporary Art Show at the Conrad Hotel (Room 4118). This will be our first art show presenting two established female artists from Sweden. These artists have a particular humoristic approach to their works. We will also be participating at the Prestige Christmas Fair at the Conrad Hotel on 1 December. In addition to our normal exhibits we'll be offering smaller artworks suitable for Christmas gifts.

Who are you bringing out for the show?

Karin Olofsson is a witty, lively and intriguing textile artist from Sweden. Her artworks are a distinctive combination of reality and fantasy that appeal to a broad audience and are fun for all ages. Karin's canvas is composed of her original self-created mixed media, often combining her photographs, embroidery, paintings and prints

Marie Lång hans is an established Swedish artist who graduated from the

Royal Institute of Art, Sweden, 1983. Her individually handcrafted works include ceramic sculptures, paintings, drawings and public artworks. Her artworks are a must-see.



A word from the artists

How do you feel about participating in your first ACAS?

Karin: I've never had the pleasure of visiting Hong Kong before, but I think that as an artist I'll find great inspiration during my upcoming trip. The ACAS is held during the "Golden Week" and to celebrate this holiday I have created a special art piece just for this show.

Marie: I went to see the ACAS in March and was stunned by the high artistic standard and diversity of the art. It's a very welcoming environment that inspires interesting meetings with other artists, collectors and networking in general. I've been working on a special edition of my series "Hogs & Cods", which will only be available at the show.

What are your thoughts on the art scene in Hong Kong in general?

Karin: There is a unique appreciation for art in Hong Kong, with an understanding for the importance of freedom in art; this pleases an artist's heart – including mine.

Marie: Artists are setting new trends with a high level of craftsmanship using new materials and innovative ways to express themselves.

The Asia Contemporary Art Show will be held at the Conrad Hotel, Pacific Place, Admiralty from 8 to 11 October 2015. asiacontemporaryart.com

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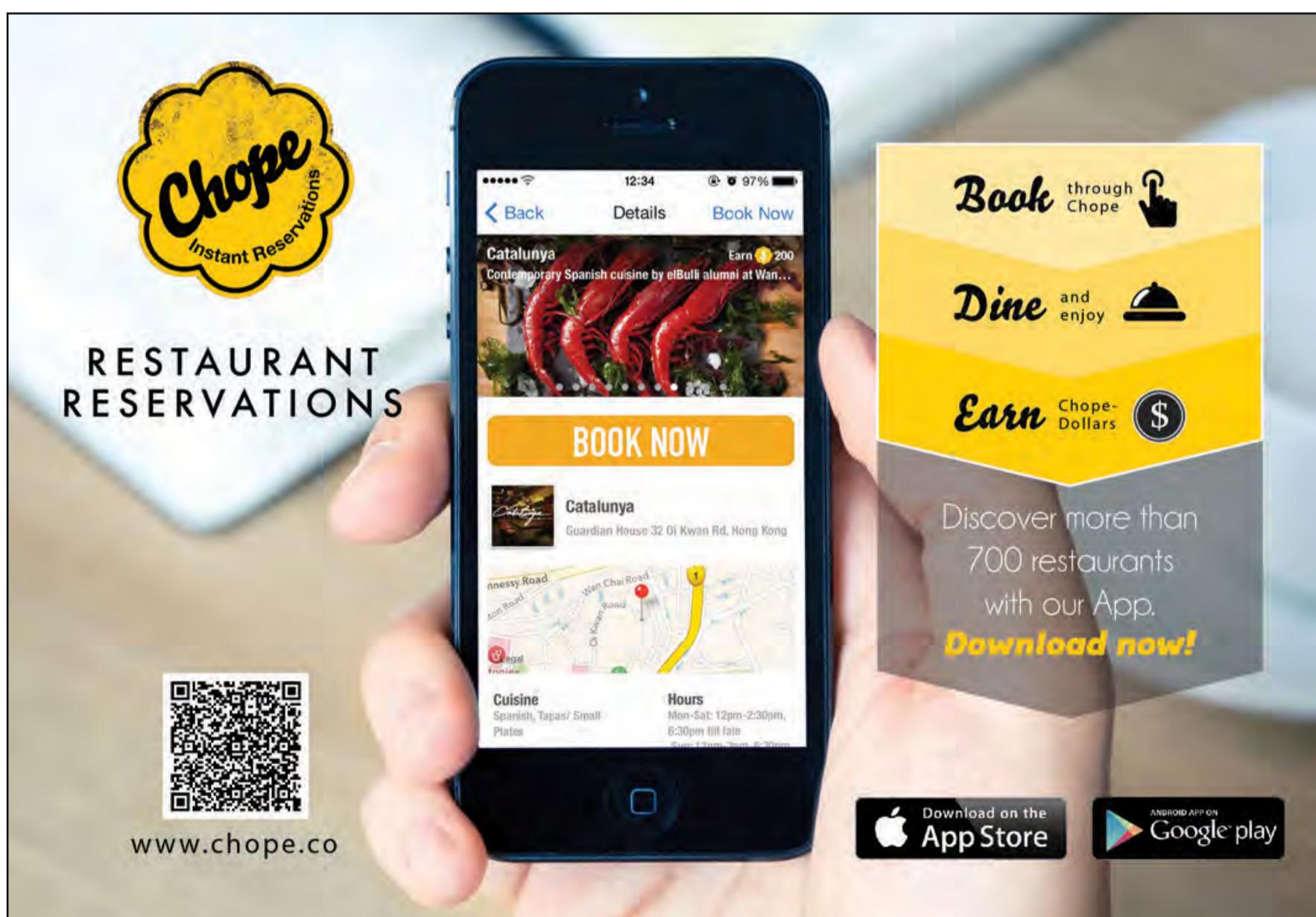


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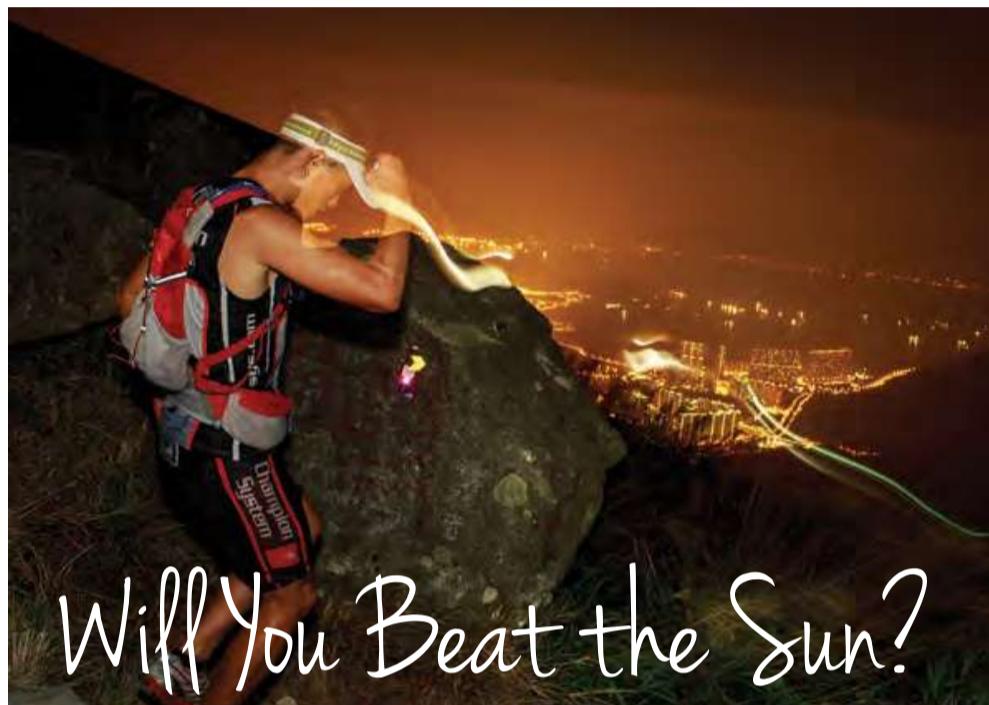


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Hong Kong's most popular all-night trail race returns to Lantau Island on 16 October, as 1,500 trekkers set off from Mui Wo to "beat the sun", hiking or running 43km to reach the summit of Lantau Peak before dawn. To date, **Barclays MoonTrekker** has raised over HK\$6m for charity, and this year it will be supporting **The Nature Conservancy** to protect ocean and rainforest areas of Southeast Asia. Think of the runners out there all night while you're at home tucked up in bed, and don't forget to donate to the many participants who are taking part in this great cause. barclaysmoontrekker.com | tnc.org.hk ▲



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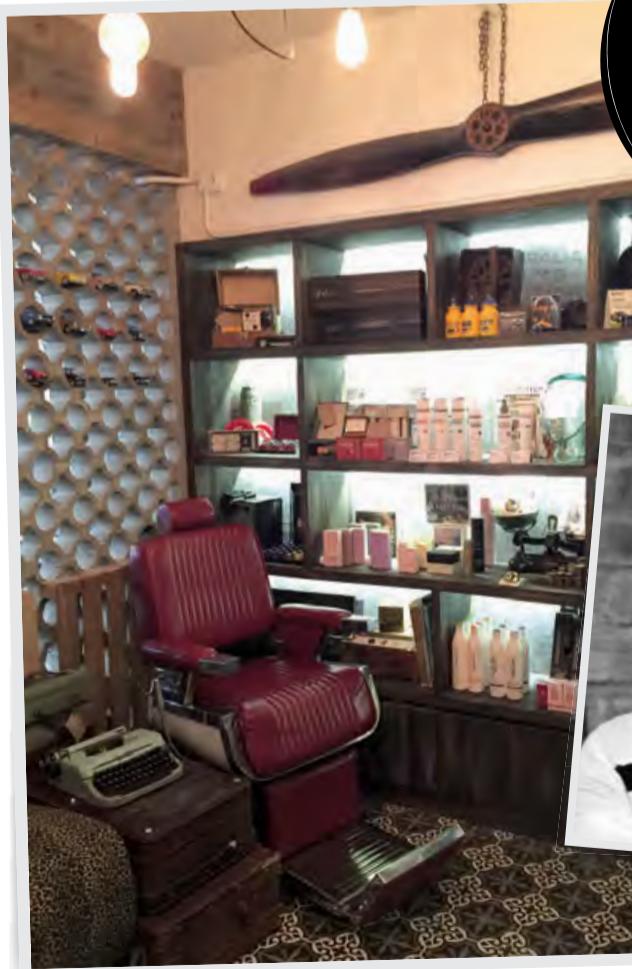
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Meet the **BEAUTY GURUS**

We go behind the scenes of three popular Hong Kong hair salons and spas, and chat with the experts about what makes them and their businesses tick, plus some upcoming trends to keep an eye on.



Tell us a bit about your background in hair and how you came to set up shop in Hong Kong.

I'm originally from Australia and was recruited from there to come and work in Hong Kong many years ago. At the time, I thought it would be a good opportunity to gain some international experience I could then take back to Australia; but as it turned out, I'm still here. I worked with some top salons of that time for a number of years until I felt I couldn't go any further. It was then that I considered leaving HK and started looking for other opportunities. I was wandering the streets contemplating my next move when I came across a cute little space in Soho; I called the number and rented it there and then. It's been a remarkable journey from that point on to lead me to have my current salon, DAZ.

You have a real cultural mix on the salon team. Does this bring a unique perspective and skill-set to your hairdressing?

Yes. I've always tried to maintain a very international mix with the stylists in my team. I've been very fortunate to have some really wonderful people be part of my business – I'd even go as far as to say we have always maintained the most international salon mix in HK. This has allowed us to develop different target areas and specific skill-sets for cross-cultural services.

How would you describe the visual style of the salon?

My current salon is what I call "vindustrial" – a mix of vintage and industrial design and décor styles. I don't go for the typical salon look or feel, and with DAZ I wanted something more personal, so it's moulded after what I personally like.

What hair trends do you predict for the year ahead?

This is always an interesting question. We tend to provide personal service at DAZ and design styles to suit individual clients, regardless of whether it's the latest "it" style or not.

From a trend perspective, mid-length hair will be the way forward for the coming year; also, long bobs, lobs or tousled versions of both. Colour is always a big part of what we do, and dramatic silver/greys are a very hot upcoming look. Of course, this colour is not for the mainstream, so we still do more subtle versions, mixing ombre, balayage and freehand colouring techniques to work with different styles and clients.

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What's your background in hair and how did you come to set up shop in Hong Kong?

My wife Séverine and I worked for the renowned French hairdressing franchise, the Dessange Group, for more than 10 years, including training at the Dessange Academy in Paris. After five years, I was chosen to be the Manager and Artistic Director for a new Dessange salon in Biarritz, France.

We soon started talking about the possibility of an international career, and when I turned 29 we went for it; our first destination was Taipei, where, in 1993, we opened the first Dessange salon and signature Training Academy in Asia.

Unfortunately, I had to return to France after a cancer scare, and do what was necessary to survive. After rebuilding, we went to the US in 1995, working in New York and Nashville.

Asia beckoned again, and after a brief second stint in Taiwan, we moved to Hong Kong in 1999. In 2003, we opened in Central Pottinger Street for six successful years before opening a new flagship Salon and Spa in 2009.

How are organic hair products better for treatments?

We use only natural and certified organic products from the UK, with ingredients that are as pure as possible. They work as well as any conventional chemical brands but without damaging the health of your hair. We're also able to be creative with these products, whether it's for highlights, ombre colouring, anti-frizz treatments or other techniques.

Tell us a bit more about your personalised beauty packages.

Our Spa is incorporated inside the salon. We design a "one-stop service" experience for different needs with our Hair & Spa Combo, and our therapists are well trained in traditional French spa techniques. Our Lymphatic Facial and



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Tell us a bit about yourself and Glow Spa.

Most of my career has been in banking. After 15 years in the financial services industry, I decided it wasn't what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I wanted to move to an industry that was people-focused. Glow Spa was established over 10 years ago by a beauty industry expert and has been operating in Central serving a loyal clientele. When I met Ceri Silk and found she was looking for someone to take over her business, I learnt that she and I shared many of the same ideals.



What drove the jump from finance to Glow Spa?

A spa is first and foremost about people. Banks perhaps less so. Glow has always had an incredible rapport between the staff and the clientele, and I wanted to contribute to that tradition. Owning and working in a spa is an amazing opportunity to meet real people and hear their stories. We have such a wonderfully diverse clientele who come to Glow to relax, completely trusting in the expertise and care of our therapists.

You think very highly of your team, then.

I do! They're a remarkable group of people. They're all wonderfully qualified and as interested in people as I am. They enjoy what they do and I think our clients recognise this. We try to match our clients to the best therapist who will then hopefully be their therapist for life! The team takes the time to listen to where you have concerns, or an interest in change, and provide realistic advice on what Glow can do for you and how long it will take. There are no miracle cures but there are fantastic results if the therapist takes the time to provide the right guidance. Each booking has enough time at the beginning and end to ensure the client and therapist can catch up, including running through what should follow the session, how to use the home care or even just to finish that story about their best friend's latest antics.

When your friends from the bank come to Glow, what do you recommend?

I'm a huge fan of the Corrective Facial; it's the facial I choose because I can see the results – it really has made a difference to the fine lines and wrinkles around my eyes in particular. Ultimately, though, everyone needs to talk to their therapist and have a recommendation made. There's no one-size-fits-all. We're all different! ☺

9F Parker House
72 Queen's Road, Central
2525 5198 | cerisilk.com

Delivery Time: 10 key questions about having a baby

By Rebecca Bisset



At any one time, there always seems to be a large percentage of the expat population that is pregnant. I know *Expat Living* has been prolific in this regard, with over 36 babies being born to members of staff in the 13 years we've been in business!

Having a baby as an expat can be a scary thing to go through, especially if a place is new to us and we lack the presence of family and close friends. So there's a real need for external support and knowledge.

To help with this, our team came up with a list of questions they would want to ask about the whole process of having a baby in hospital. We put these to senior midwife MARY WATKIN, to answer them on behalf of **Matilda International Hospital**. Matilda staff have looked after people for over a hundred years, so they know a lot about delivering babies!

#1 What types of rooms are available in the postpartum/recovery ward of the hospital?

There's quite a choice: VIP rooms, private rooms, twin rooms and standard rooms (four beds); all have ensuite bathroom facilities and bedside medical equipment. For shared rooms, there are privacy screens. We suggest pregnant ladies advise their preference when they make a maternity booking with us through their obstetricians. It does depend on availability at the actual admitting time though.

#2 Can my partner spend the night with me at Matilda?

Both VIP rooms and private rooms have a sofa bed. There is no extra overnight charge for one lodger in all private rooms or VIP rooms.

Partners of ladies in shared rooms will need to arrange accommodation in Mid-Levels or Central. A list of nearby accommodation options is available, so do let us know if you need it.

#3 How early will I need to register or pay a deposit to ensure I can deliver at the Matilda?

As soon as the doctor confirms the pregnancy and submits the requisite laboratory and blood test reports, the obstetrician's clinic makes the booking on your behalf. Once the hospital provisionally confirms the booking, a deposit is needed to secure the booking.



#4 Are lactation consultants on call in the postpartum ward?

Our breastfeeding rate is over 95 percent, the highest among private hospitals in Hong Kong. We encourage skin-to-skin contact right after the baby is born. New mums are also given support to breastfeed the baby within two hours after delivery.

Breastfeeding should be on-demand, and skin-to-skin contact can help establish bonding and lead to successful lactating.

There is breastfeeding support round the clock, either by lactation consultants or health professionals with breastfeeding training. The hospital's rooming-in policy also facilitates on-demand breastfeeding.

#5 How often can we expect to see other specialists like midwives, obstetricians and paediatricians in the days after delivery?

The hospital's midwives and healthcare assistants are stationed at the ward around the clock. Your obstetrician will see you every day. It's helpful to write down any questions or concerns you may have, so you're ready to discuss them. Your paediatrician will examine your baby daily, and will also see you to discuss any questions you have regarding your baby.

#6 What special birthing amenities does the hospital offer?

You can use the bath-tub in the delivery room for a warm bath to relieve pain during the first stage of labour. For safety reasons, we do not facilitate water births.

Birthing balls, yoga mats and beanbags are available to encourage mobility and support active labour. Some women find sitting on a birthing ball and rocking the pelvis helps with alleviating discomfort. It also helps move the baby to the right position for delivery.

#7 Do you have prenatal/birthing classes that we can attend?

We provide two types of antenatal courses for mothers who are planning for normal delivery as well as elective Caesarean section. You can call the Health Education Department at 2849 0357 or send an email to health@matilda.org for enquiries. Course details are available online at matilda.org/en/wellness-programmes/antenatal-courses.

Those mums who are keen to work on their fitness can sign up for our group antenatal Pilates classes or individual antenatal exercise training offered by the hospital's physiotherapists.

#8 Does Matilda run hospital tours?

Hospital tours can be arranged within office hours on weekdays, with Client Relations. You can call 2849 0355 or email communications@matilda.org to arrange one. Alternatively, a coffee morning is held once every month for ladies with confirmed bookings to see our maternity facilities and meet our midwife for a question-and-answer session.



#9 During a mum's stay at hospital, can a newborn be in the same room at pretty much all times? Or are there only specific time slots when they are allowed in?

We encourage babies to stay with mothers in the same rooms to establish bonding and breastfeeding early. If a mum feels tired, she can use the nursery room. Babies who require phototherapy treatment for jaundice will generally stay in the nursery room.

#10 If birthing goes smoothly, are parents allowed to leave with their baby the next day, or do they have to wait a few days in hospital?

Many mothers prefer to have a rest after delivery, hence the hospital's maternity package usually ranges from two to four nights, depending on whether it's a normal delivery or a Caesarean section. Individual clients may want to come home early, to look after their other children, for example. As long as doctors have assessed a mother and her baby's condition, and found them fit to leave, they can return home early. ☺

Matilda International Hospital is at 41 Mount Kellett Road, The Peak. matilda.org

Mind the Bump

Keeping the body healthy during pregnancy is a huge priority for a lot of mums-to-be, and many are discovering the benefits of prenatal Pilates. EMILY MCCABE recently sampled such a class at **Flex Central**.



I'm already a big fan of Flex, and have been taking a number of their classes for some time. Being pregnant now – and in the later stage of pregnancy – I've been trying to keep up my normal exercise routine and stay in my favourite classes for as long as possible. Lately, though, I've found it hard to keep up. So I decided to try a Flex prenatal class.

The studio is one of the most comfortable workout spaces I've visited. It's peaceful, clean and almost "spa-like". There's a strong female following, thanks no doubt to the types of classes on offer, and the fact that sessions are largely based around female wellbeing.

Through its very holistic approach, Flex promotes the message of the importance of a healthy lifestyle; these are more than just exercise classes.

My class included women at different stages of pregnancy, though most of us were in the late stages. Anna Serafinas Luk, our instructor, took a lot of time to ask us all independently about our situation, and discuss different aches and pains before we started, and during the class she continued to explain all of the different movements along with their benefits in depth.

You forget that prenatal classes aren't just about working up a big sweat,



but also about teaching mums-to-be how their bodies are changing and the different areas that need to be addressed to support the growing baby as they go along.

We started out with lots of stretches, opening the joints and warming up the body. Then we began our Pilates mat workout. The main focus is on the pelvic floor, lower abdominal and hips, and on strengthening the lower abdominal region to help alleviate lower back pain and aid in the delivery.

It's essential when it comes to keeping your body healthy during pregnancy that you address these areas on a regular basis. You do find yourself over-compensating with the wrong muscles to carry your new and heavy weight, and this, along with a lack of core muscles, can lead to real discomfort – not to mention issues like sciatica. Prenatal Pilates teaches you to be aware of your posture during pregnancy, and to remember to switch on the muscles needed to support you. Anna incorporated weights and some barre work along with the mat routine, and I left feeling recharged and challenged, but at the same time having done a class tailored for my pregnancy.

I was in luck having Anna as my instructor. Aside from all of her qualifications in the different areas of Pilates and barre, she's also a professional dancer and doesn't take any of her classes lightly (I used to do her barre classes before my pregnancy). I must admit that I didn't think I would feel as challenged in a prenatal class but I was happily surprised. ☺

Flex Central is at 3/F, Man Cheung Building, 15-17 Wyndham Street. For information on schedules and classes, call 2813 2399 or visit flexhk.com.

All About Oils

Many practitioners now recommend that expectant mums take an omega-3 oil supplement alongside their pre-natal vitamins. JESSICA SIMKIN, nutritionist and founder of **Body Awakening**, explains why.

What is omega-3/DHA?

Omega oils are the essential fatty acids required by our body. DHA is one of two fatty acids largely found in fish and fish oils; they can also be found in flaxseeds and flaxseed oil, and walnuts and walnut oil. Your best sources of it come from eating wild caught fish and further supplementing with fish oils. It's necessary that we obtain these essential fats through our diet as they can't be produced internally. They serve many essential functions and are important for both our physical and mental health.

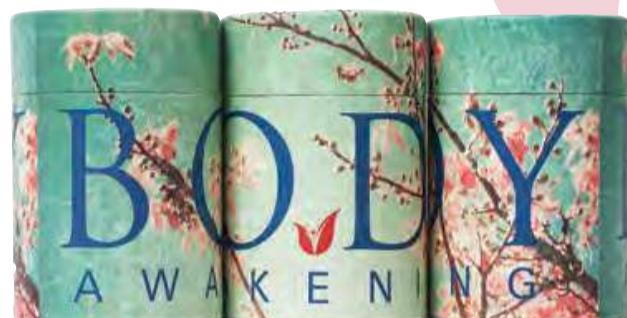


Tell us a bit more about how it's sourced.

DHA is most commonly found in fish oil and krill oil. Krill oil tends to be a slightly better choice as it contains more DHA than many other fish, including salmon. Also, krill is lower on the food chain so it also tends to be lower in heavy metals and toxins than oils from larger fish.

Why would you recommend taking it during pregnancy?

Omega-3s and especially DHA are recommended during pregnancy because they're vital for the development of the brain and eyes of the foetus. The



human brain relies heavily on DHA, and pregnancy increases those needs as the baby receives all its DHA from the mother. Supplementing with omega-3 oils both supports the developing foetus and protects the mother against deficiency.

Body Awakening is at 1003, 43-55 Wyndham Street, Central. 8192 7636 | body-awakening.net

Well-Rounded Approach

Some say it takes a village to raise a child, but for many women a good support team is essential from pregnancy onwards! Osteopath INES DE BEER opened **The Round Clinic** in May this year; here she introduces us to its practitioners who are supporting mothers and their children from pre-pregnancy to birth and beyond.

As an osteopath herself, Ines looks to natural treatments that support and help the body during various stages of the process of childbirth – before, during and after pregnancy. Her team members at The Round Clinic all have different specialities, but with the same natural, holistic approach and goals.

Acupuncturist **Michelle Law** works to strengthen the function of the reproductive system and hormonal balance before conception. A structural problem in the lumbar spine or a pelvic misalignment can also affect the chances of conceiving. Ines says: "I always recommend that mothers-to-be address their back pain or old back or hip injuries before they start a pregnancy, as the

weight of the baby and the structural and hormonal changes in the body will put extra strain on an already misaligned pelvis." Ines and fellow osteopath **Julia Santos** assist with this both before and during pregnancy.

The newest addition to the clinic is **Sofie Jacobs**, who is both a registered midwife and a certified Pilates teacher, specialising in one-on-one post-natal rehab of pelvic floor and abdominal strength after giving birth.

Ines is known for seeing babies with head asymmetries, colic, reflux, and more. Older children with gait issues, small injuries, aches or strains are also treated at the clinic. The clinic's homeopaths, **Michelle Ricaille** and



Lisa Griffiths, look after both children and mothers; Michelle focuses mainly on food allergies, eczema and nutritional support, and Lisa's interests lie in supporting the physical and emotional wellbeing of mothers. ☙

The Round Clinic is at One Island South, 2 Heung Yip Road, Wong Chuk Hang. 2648 2612 | theroundclinic.com



Healing at Home

BROOKE CHENOWETH discovers a new service dedicated to helping mums heal and restore their bodies back to their pre-pregnancy balance.

When my first son was born, I was shocked on so many levels. I hurt everywhere, I was fatigued beyond comprehension, and after nine months of love, concern and attention from my family and doctors, suddenly the focus was solely on my new baby. At a time when I needed the most support, I had very little to help me recover – it was a physical and emotional low point.

I'm not alone, either; many new mums have experienced this same sensation. It was for this reason that

Karen Loke, herself a mother of three, started her practice **Restoring Mums** four years ago, specifically to meet the needs of mothers in the first few months after giving birth.

Karen trained in traditional Malay and Indonesian massage and postnatal care after giving up her career as an engineer. To enhance what she'd learned, she undertook a number of recognised qualifications in Australia, the US and Taiwan; she's a certified practitioner in Maya Abdominal massage, for instance, and in Dr Vodder's Manual Lymph Drainage, and she holds a Diploma in Holistic Massage.

It's this combination of formal anatomical knowledge, and traditional healing practices that make up the services that are offered at Restoring Mums.

Among these services is the "slimum" treatment, which Karen developed to offer to clients in their own homes, so they don't need to worry about leaving the baby or travelling so soon after birth. Before commencing a treatment, Karen personally visits the mother to discuss individual needs; as she says, "the wellbeing of the mum is just as important as that of the baby."

Indeed, at a time when almost everyone is focused on the baby, Karen says most mums really relish the opportunity to take a bit of time out for themselves.



circulation, encourage fat-burning, and support the womb and internal organs. This massage uses 100% organic essential oils and base oils, custom blended for your condition. Karen focuses on pampering and relaxing the body, with techniques that ease the aches and pains associated with pregnancy, delivery and caring for a newborn.

- A fresh ginger compress, which helps to increase circulation and promote healing.
- An abdominal massage to realign the internal organs and uterus, and increase blood flow and break down fat deposits.
- Another herbal mask, applied using a centuries-old remedy for a flatter tummy.
- Abdominal binding. This practice dates back hundreds of years, and takes advantage of the body's relaxed ligaments. Karen's training in anatomy comes into play here as she combines traditional techniques with the understanding of a woman's body to protect the womb and realign the hips, pelvis and belly, restoring them to their natural position. Ideally, binding should be done within three months of giving birth, and Karen recommends 10 consecutive daily sessions, of six to eight hours of continuous wear.



The treatments offered by Karen and her team are not just about getting your figure back, but about restoring balance and wellness – something that will surely benefit all mums and their babies in the long run. ■

Restoring Mums is at Room 802, OfficePlus @ Sheung Wan, 93-103 Wing Lok Street, Sheung Wan. restoringmums.com | themamapost.com

About the sessions

There are three different slimum packages available, depending on your needs; the basic package offers a tummy-specific series of treatments including the following:

- A tummy mask using all-natural ingredients; this soothes and helps reduce stretch marks, the linea nigra and discomfort from trapped wind.
- A traditional Jamu massage to reduce bloating, increase



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THE GREAT DEBATE

By Amy Greenburg



Breast cancer screening has been a source of controversy for decades, with some medical experts and patients questioning whether the benefits of mammography outweigh the risks. Currently, most women use mammography as their main form of routine screening, while other methods like magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) are typically conducted only for further evaluation, or in conjunction with mammography, particularly for those women at high risk. Though most major health organisations have concluded that mammography is a valuable screening tool, others maintain that MRI is more effective and should be primarily conducted even for those women with an average risk of developing breast cancer. Here's a look at the not-so-black-and-white debate.

Density and False Negatives

The debate over the age at which women should start screening for breast cancer is controversial, partly because younger women have denser breasts, which makes it difficult to interpret mammograms in women below 50, or below menopausal age. After menopause, the breast's glandular tissue is replaced by fatty tissue, making mammographic interpretations more accurate. As a result, mammography isn't generally considered an effective technique for younger women.

The age issue aside, women with denser breasts are usually encouraged to undergo MRI or ultrasound screenings as mammograms don't always pick up cancers hidden by the dense tissue, producing false negatives – when mammograms appear normal even though breast cancer is present, creating a false sense of security and a possible delay in cancer diagnosis.

While it's true that MRI has been shown to rule out the presence of cancer to a high degree of certainty, making it an excellent tool for screening – particularly for patients at high genetic

risk or those with dense tissue – many experts point out that MRI can miss some cancers that would be detected by mammography; while MRI is considered to be more sensitive, mammography is considered to be more specific.

Surgeon **Dr Wai-Ka Hung**, for instance, recommends MRI scans for certain groups of patients, including high risk young women with the BRCA gene mutation.

According to Dr Hung, recent advances in the field of mammography make the screening process even more effective. One example is **3D mammography** (tomosynthesis), which is an extension of a digital mammogram. "This technique can take a clearer image of the breast. Compared with a standard mammogram, its benefits are a higher detection rate of cancer, less need for recall (further testing) for an abnormal result, and less discomfort, as less compression is needed during the exam."

False Positives

Some medical experts and patients feel that, when taking into account the frequency of false positives – when mammogram findings that look like cancer turn out to be benign – and the potential for causing unnecessary distress, the risks of mammography offset the benefits. This is because many women who receive false-positive results become upset and fearful about the possibility of having breast cancer, and must return for anxiety-inducing follow-ups and testing.

On the other hand, this may be outweighed by the possibility of detecting cancer in its early stages. According to Cancer Research UK, many women understand that mammography is likely to pick up cancers at an early stage when treatments work best, and they find having regular screenings reassuring.

In addition, many experts note that, while mammography may not be perfect, MRI is not a perfect tool either. According to breast surgeon **Dr Georgette Chan**, MRI scans create more false-positive results than mammograms do, because the scans are more detailed. “There is a lot of overlap between normal and abnormal tissue,” she says. “Even the timing of the scan in relation to the menstrual cycle can make a difference because of the hormonal influence. More false-positive results may mean more unnecessary biopsies and patient anxiety.”

Over-diagnosis

Also central to the debate is the concern of over-diagnosing early cancers and unnecessarily treating tumours that wouldn't have affected a woman's health during her lifetime. Since there's no way to tell which cases of cancer will go on to become invasive breast cancer, causing illness or death, almost all cancers are treated, which means some women are unnecessarily treated, or “over-treated”, with radiation and invasive procedures.

Radiation

Like normal x-rays, mammography uses ionising radiation to create images that are then analysed for any abnormalities. According to US-based

cancer organisation Susan G. Komen, while the radiation exposure during mammography can increase the risk of breast cancer over time, this increase in risk is very small. Nevertheless, the concern over exposure to small doses remains, and it's up to the individual to make that choice for herself.

To Each Her Own

The verdict? It's still complicated. It's true that there is growing evidence that breast MRI in combination with

mammography, compared with mammography alone, can increase detection of breast cancer in certain women at high risk; and although there are some risks involved with mammography, forgoing mammograms altogether can be risky. In the end, however, it really comes down to each individual speaking with her doctor and weighing the benefits and risks based on her specific circumstances, including her genetic risk of cancer and her breast density, among other factors.

TREATMENTS FOR BREAST CANCER

According to Dr Hung, the standard treatment here is multi-disciplinary: “Surgery is the first step, followed by other adjuvant treatments such as chemotherapy, radiotherapy, targeted treatment and anti-hormonal treatment, depending on the stage of the disease and different cancer subtypes.”

More recently, doctors here have been able to use neoadjuvant chemotherapy – chemo before surgery – to shrink a tumour and make a lumpectomy possible. Once a tumour has been removed, it is studied to determine which treatments will be necessary after surgery.

For small tumours, a wide excision of the tumour – known as **breast-conserving surgery** – can be done, followed by several weeks of radiation treatment. “The advantage here is that the majority of the normal remaining breast can be preserved,” says Dr Chan.

For larger tumours, on the other hand, or those involving the nipple, conserving the breast may not always be possible. In this case, a **mastectomy** (breast removal) may be a safer bet. “Usually, patients who have undergone a mastectomy do not require further radiation therapy,” she says.



RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY

For patients who need a mastectomy, Dr Chan says she usually offers breast reconstruction surgery, which aims to rebuild the breast mound. In fact, she says, 80 to 90 percent of her mastectomy patients opt for breast reconstruction, which can be done either at the time of the mastectomy or a few months after chemotherapy or radiation therapy has been completed.

“Reconstruction not only physically rebuilds the breast mound – making it easier for the patient to wear her clothes and even a swimsuit – but it also rebuilds her self-confidence and does wonders for her self-image,” says Dr Chan. ■

Dr Wai-Ka Hung
Pedder Clinic, 4/F, 9
Queen's Road Central,
Hong Kong. 2868 9333
info@pedderclinic.hk

Dr Georgette Chan
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Kicking Goals

We all know how mad this town is for rugby, especially when the Sevens is on. But on the sidelines, the women's teams are gaining momentum and recognition, as more and more girls sign up for the game. Coach ANNA RICHARDS gives us the lowdown.

Tell us a little bit about your own rugby career to date.

I played rugby for New Zealand for close to 20 years, from 1992 to 2010, and I also captained the New Zealand Sevens team for a couple of years. I won four World Cups with the New Zealand XV's team, was inducted into the IRB Hall of Fame in November of last year, and, throughout my career, had a lot of fun.

I became involved in coaching in 1999 when I injured my knee and was unable to play rugby for a season. I then continued coaching my club team all the way through my career, from 1999 to 2011. I successfully applied for the coaching job here in Hong Kong, arriving in January 2014 to take up my current role coaching the Hong Kong Elite Women's Sevens team based at the Hong Kong Sports Institute (HKSI).

How is the HK women's team doing this year? What's next for them?

The girls have done phenomenally well this season in Sevens. We started the year with a tour to Margaret River, Western Australia, and then moved on to the Borneo Sevens where we finished fifth. In March, we had the Hong Kong Women's Sevens where we achieved our best result ever and where I witnessed some of the best Sevens rugby that the girls have played. We made the semi-finals of the tournament for the first time ever and ended up fourth; it was a great result for us. Coming up, we have the Asia Rugby Sevens Series in September



and October, and – the big one for us for this year – the Olympic Qualifiers, which take place over two legs in November in Hong Kong and Tokyo.

Tell me about some of the initiatives here to get more girls playing rugby.

The HKRFU runs initiatives with both schools and District Councils, in which they expose the game to kids and get them involved in a team sport so they can learn some different skills.

At the HKSI, we also ran a "talent ID night" where we invited any sportspeople

– even those who hadn't played the game before – to come along and try out, and see if they could be a potential Sevens player. We had over 90 people sign up and it was a great exercise for us to see girls who'd never played Sevens before.

I think we have the most women and girls involved in the game that HKRFU has ever had in its history, and this has been helped in my opinion by the inclusion of rugby at the Olympics and the fact that the HKRFU has been on a massive drive to get girls involved in rugby.

Rugby is typically a male-dominated sport, with the women's Sevens being overshadowed by the men's, for example; what are some of the obstacles you face in getting more support and publicity for the women's tournament?

It would be great if we could get more women's games in the main stadium. At the moment, the women's final is the only match played in the stadium, but it would be great if we could squeeze the semi-finals in too.

The way that we'll continue to grow our audience is by increasing the media exposure for the game; I think that with Now TV streaming all of the women's games live, it's great for our game.

What do you love most about coaching the Sevens team?

Sevens is a tough and exciting game – fast and skilful, and all wrapped up in 14 minutes. The outcome of the game

“Sevens is a tough, exciting, fast and skillful game, and the outcome can turn on one mistake or one moment of brilliance.”

can turn on one mistake or one moment of brilliance. It's a high-pressure, high work-rate and hard game, but definitely an exciting one. The job here in Hong Kong has been a massive learning curve for me as I've never coached in a professional environment before, but the role has been extremely rewarding and very, very enjoyable. We have a great

setup at the HKSI with all of the support staff and facilities that a coach requires, and I thoroughly enjoy coaching the women's team – they're a great bunch of girls with a great work ethic. ☺

For more information on men's and women's rugby in Hong Kong, see hkrugby.com.

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Is Your Screen Affecting Your Sight?

AN INSIDER'S GUIDE TO COMPUTER VISION SYNDROME

These days, we all spend a lot of time looking at a screen, whether it's a computer, a smartphone or just a regular TV. As helpful as our devices can be, all this screen time can have a detrimental impact on our vision. Optometrist VANESSA THAI gives us the rundown on how to know when we've had too much, and how to manage eye fatigue.

With the surge in the use of electronic devices – computers, tablets and phones, the number of patients suffering from Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS) is also steadily rising. Digital eye fatigue and discomfort occur as a result of prolonged time spent focusing or concentrating at near distances in a sustained manner, and this poses a concern, particularly in younger patients with developing eyes and visual systems.

What to look out for

Symptoms of eye fatigue include:

- frontal headaches
- eye strain
- irritated, dry eyes (a result of reduced blinking)
- blurred vision
- slow focusing
- light sensitivity
- double vision

What to do

To manage and reduce eye fatigue you should:

- take periodic two-minute breaks from computer work by blinking and focusing on distant objects – a good excuse to look out the window!
- try tear supplements or lubricants for dry eyes
- position the computer approximately 40 to 45cm away from you, and squarely in front of you
- position other documents immediately next to the computer to reduce eye movements and focusing changes
- in some cases, wearing spectacles for computer use and reading may help; an optometrist will be able to advise you if you need glasses
- ensure you have adequate office lighting and minimise glare and reflections on the screen

If you spend any amount of time looking at a screen, or if you find yourself experiencing any issues with your eyes or vision, it's advised that you have routine comprehensive eye examinations by a Part 1 Registered Optometrist to ensure there are no underlying vision problems. ☺

Vanessa has worked at Polytechnic University's School of Optometry, co-authored a chapter on Asia for the global resource, "Optometric Care within the Public Health Community", and currently consults at Matilda International Hospital and iSight Optometric Eyecare Centre (Crawford House, Central).



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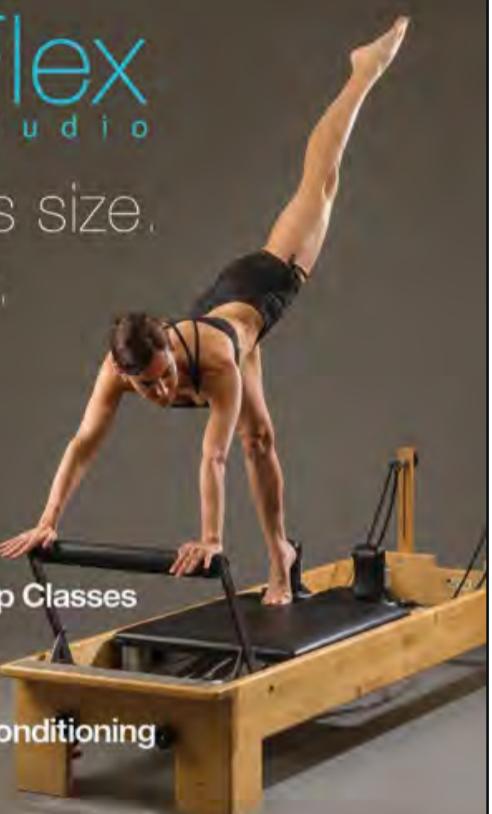
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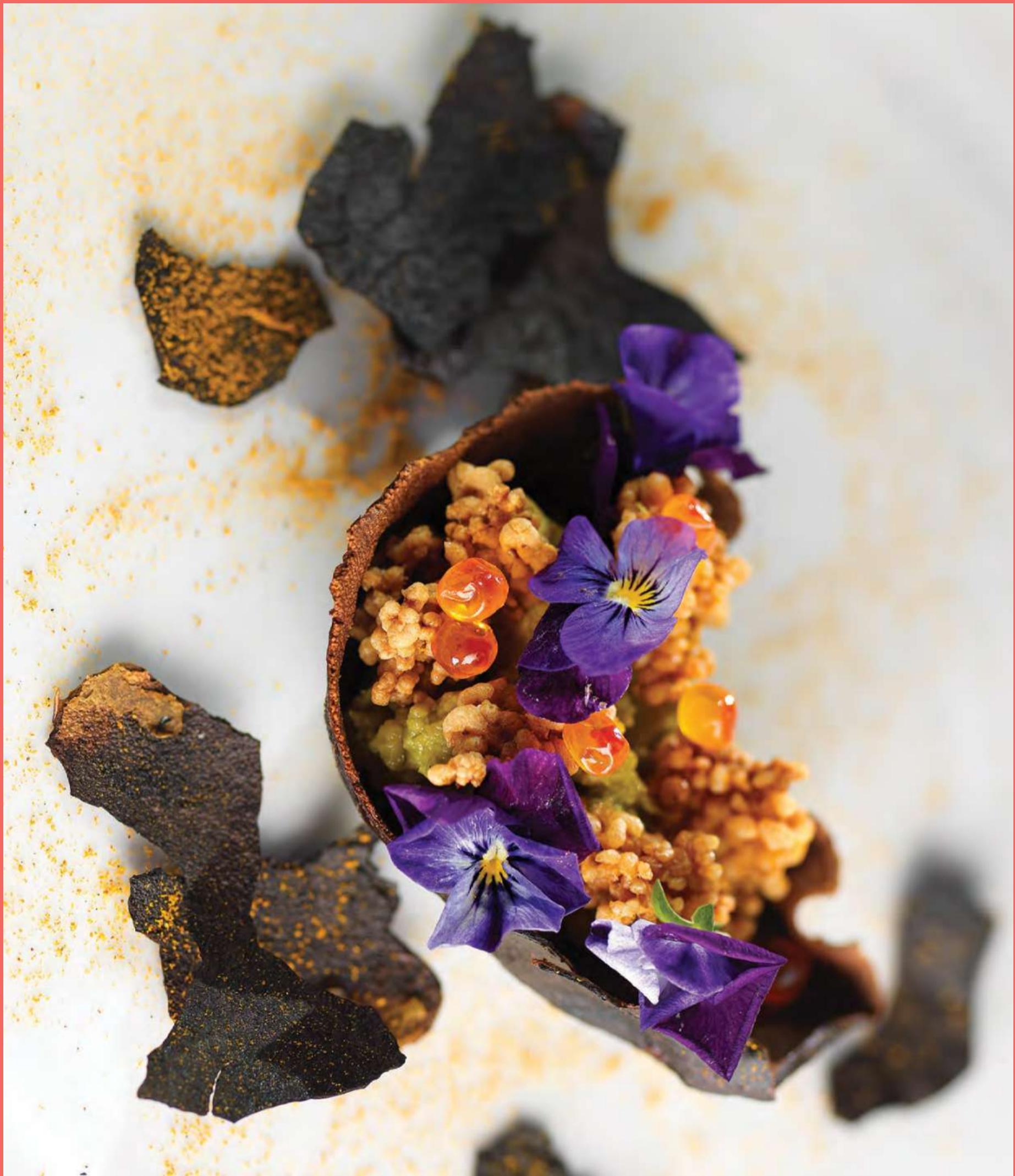
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Wine & Dine

WHAT'S NEW

The latest trends in food and wine

TOP TEN

After undergoing a renovation and re-launch this summer, the space that was once Liberty Private Works is now **Twenty Six by Liberty** – a private kitchen/chef's-table experience that can only be described as one-of-a-kind. With **Chef Bjoern Alexander** at the helm, diners are treated to 10 courses, each one presented and explained by the chef himself. Watching the preparation that goes into each dish is a treat in itself, and the food is sublime. With ingredients sourced from all over the world, you'll find delicacies like French oysters, Peruvian manioc and Asian "salty fingers" (edible seaweed). Chef Alexander confesses that he loves cooking for vegetarians, and those with allergies can also be catered for with advance notice. There are only 26 seats and it's only open for dinner, so reservations are essential. Book now, and bring an appetite! 26/F, Stanley 11, 11 Stanley Street, Central. **5186 3282**



NEW MOON

Famous Cantonese fine-dining restaurant **Fook Lam Moon** has launched Fook Lam Moon Fine Foods – a gourmet store with a difference. Signature specialities from the restaurant are available to take home, including signature XO sauce, cashews and walnuts, and a selection of Chinese dried delicacies and mooncakes. Also available are Chinese tea from **Lock Cha Teahouse**, coffee beans by **Sensory Artisan** and Belgian chocolate by **Neuhaus Chocolatier**, all beautifully presented as gifts or in sets – perfect to take back "home" for friends and family looking for something uniquely Hong Kong! Shop B, 35-45 Johnston Road, Wan Chai. **2363 8810** ▼



JUST LIKE MAMMA MAKES

Craving a home-style Italian meal? The menu at **Prego Italian** features traditional favourites like cannelloni, eggplant parmigiana, risotto, pizza and, of course, a generous selection of Italian wines and desserts. Embracing the concept of family dining, the ambience is stylishly retro, yet homely and laidback. It's the kind of place you'd take your Italian *nonna* for dinner, and she'd feel right at home. Prego Italian is open daily for lunch and dinner, with reservations recommended on the weekends. 43 Elgin Street, Soho, Central. **2651 5700** | diningconcepts.com ▲

OLÉ!

From now until December, you can tour Spain without leaving Hong Kong at **Tapeo**. Spanish food varies greatly between the country's regions, and over the coming months Tapeo will feature the cuisine, produce and ingredients of 17 different regions. In October, the dishes of Catalonia, Aragon, Navarra, La Rioja and Basque will be featured, while November will see Cantabria, Asturias, Castile and Leon, and Galicia in the spotlight. The weekly specials are launched every Friday. UG/F, Shop A, Au's Building, 15-19 Hollywood Road, Central. **3171 1989** | conceptcreations.hk ▼



Macau Extra!

Following on from last issue, we bring you more of the latest hotel and dining news and specials on offer in Macau. Time to grab a ferry for a weekend away! (And don't miss our big Macau travel story from page 155.)

BETTER BUTLERS

Opening on the Cotai strip in December, **The St. Regis Macao** will be bringing one of its renowned offerings to Macau – the "Allow Me" butler service. The hotel is offering all guests its signature, 24-hour, St. Regis Butler Service, designed to help customise each guest's stay according to their specific needs, tastes and preferences. Fancy a bubble bath and a cup of tea? Need a last-minute restaurant reservation? Prefer silver service with your room service? No request is too big or too small. Sounds like something we could all do with from time to time! Estrada Do Istmo, Cotai, Macau. +853 2882 8898 | starwoodhotels.com/stregis



THINK PINK

In support of the **Hong Kong Cancer Fund's Pink Revolution**, the **Conrad Macao, Cotai Central** has announced its "PINK Inspired 2015" campaign. Throughout October, the hotel is offering guests a series of "plush, pink experiences". You can participate by making a donation to the cause at check-out, enjoying a pink afternoon tea experience, opting for a pink room upgrade, or purchasing one of the hotel's iconic bears or rubber ducks in a special pink edition. The hotel's signature restaurant Dynasty 8 also has a special menu, and Bodhi Spa a special pink treatment for the month. Also, on 15 October, in conjunction with the **International Ladies Club of Macao**, the hotel will host a Pink Charity Ladies Lunch. Funds raised during the campaign will be donated to the HK Cancer Fund. sandscotaicentral.com | cancer-fund.org/pink ▲



NIKKEI TO MACAU

Nikkei cuisine is the latest food craze sweeping the globe, and this fusion of Japanese cooking techniques and Peruvian ingredients will be showcased at the new **AJI** restaurant at the **MGM Cotai**, slated to open next year. AJI, which literally means "chilli" in Spanish and "flavour" in Japanese, is a collaboration between MGM and Chef Mitsuhiro Tsumura who created the trend, with his Peruvian upbringing and Japanese training. The restaurant will feature a ceviche bar, hibachi grill and pisco bar, offering a selection of sake, shochu and fine wine. With Chef Tsumura's **Maido** restaurant in Lima acclaimed as one of the best 50 restaurants in the world, **AJI** looks set to offer diners something pretty special. mgmmacau.com ▲



HAIRY CRABS ARE HERE

November is known in the Chinese culinary world as hairy crab season. These little beasts pop up on menus all over the place, and are highly prized for their sweet delicate meat and rich, orange roe. Traditionally, they're eaten with a Chinese yellow wine, but the team at **Jade Dragon, City of Dreams**, has done its homework and found a French wine that suits this delicacy even better: **Frédéric Lornet Jura Vin Jaune**. The wine will be paired with hairy crabs in a special promotion that runs until mid-November. Level 2, Crown Towers, City of Dreams, Macau. +853 8868 2822 ▲

TASTETEST



Pirata

30/F, 239 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai
2887 0270 | pirata.hk

If I ever had to choose a last meal it would probably be something Italian, and it would most definitely include *arancini* – those bite-sized, deep-fried balls of rice and cheese that are just so *delizioso*.

As soon as I saw the **arancini bucket** (\$75) on the menu at **Pirata**, therefore, I was sure I'd died and gone to heaven; they're a delicacy not often found in this town. We ordered them for starters, along with a very fresh and tasty **tomato bruschetta** (\$55), and the **vitello tonnato** (\$100) – a combination of veal, tuna, mayonnaise and caper berries.

While the tasting menu looked very appealing, we chose to be a little bit sensible and went for the à la carte pasta instead. All of the pasta is made in-house, using flour and eggs imported from Italy. Another personal favourite, **tagliolini with white truffle sauce and shaved black truffles** (\$130), was very good, but I did have to ask for black pepper and extra parmesan to really give it that authentic kick that I was looking for. The **crab tortelloni with cherry tomato and basil sauce** (\$190) was delicately flavoured, allowing the crab to shine through. The portions were also generous without being overwhelming, and many of the pastas are available in half portions so you can leave room for other delights. On the side, we shared a simple **garden greens mixed salad** (\$70), which was very fresh, and perfectly dressed.

The dessert menu features Italian classics like *tiramisu* and *panna cotta*, but we went for the **chocolate lava cake**. It takes a little longer to prepare but was well worth the wait. The wine list is outstanding, with a few wines on there that we've tried in Italy but haven't been able to find in Hong Kong – a definite plus. Despite being on the 30th floor of a high-rise in Wan Chai, Pirata offers a rustic and traditional Italian vibe, and if you block out the view you could almost be in a classy *trattoria* anywhere in Italy.

Amelia Williams

MUST TRY DISH:

Crab tortelloni





Linguini Fini

49 Elgin Street, Central
2387 6338 | linguinifini.com

We arrived for dinner at Linguini Fini hungry – and luckily so, because we were treated to an absolute feast, and doggy bags were required. This for me is what Linguini Fini does best: feeds the hordes, and in a wholesome, thoughtful way.

The restaurant is a lot more than meets the eye. The ethos here is “nose-to-tail” eating – and by that I mean they really do use everything! Apart from the importance of no wastage, they also believe in using locally sourced, organic ingredients. So even though you might be indulging in a spread that combines old fashioned “peasant food” with New York *trattoria* style, you’re still consuming high-quality ingredients.

We started with the delicious **White Gold Bars** (\$108) – moreish homemade fried mozzarella sticks – and **homemade**

spicy pork sausage (\$108), which I refused to share. Next came a couple of pastas, my favourite of which was the **radiatore alla vodka** (\$148), featuring “radiator”-shaped pasta, with spicy sausage in a cream sauce; I could have this dish again and again – the difference in quality from Linguini Fini’s homemade pasta to other pastas is immense. Also enjoyable was the **pappardelle nose-to-tail Bolognese** (\$178), again clearly homemade, and with lovely subtle flavours.

For our mains, my husband was very excited about his serve of **The Bronx** (\$308), an 18-inch pizza that is very big and packed full of flavour – absolutely perfect for large groups. The pick of the night for me, even though I’m usually more of a pasta person, was definitely my **dry-rubbed hanger steak** (\$168). I couldn’t believe how nice the cut was, not to mention the smooth flavour and texture. I find it quite hard getting a great steak in Hong Kong, coming from Australia, but this was beautiful and the price tag so reasonable.

It’s funny how you always seem to have room for a slice of sweetness, even after a huge feast. For dessert, we managed to try both the cute **caramel apple pie** and the **chocolate banana cake** (both \$78). Absolutely delectable!

I love this spot for large groups – it’s satisfying knowing there’ll be something for everyone. And being in the heart of Soho means you’re right in the middle of the action, which is so much fun.

Linguini Fini expertly combines a home-grown appeal with thoughtful ingredients and an approachable, friendly atmosphere. And the prices are reasonable; in fact, for what you get in terms of effort and quality, I’d say it’s a bargain.

Emily McCabe

MUST TRY DISH:

Dry-rubbed hanger steak



Motorino Pizzeria

14 Shelley Street, Central | 2801 6881
15 Ship Street, Wan Chai | 2520 0690
motorinopizza.com

While a bustling city can never have too many pizzerias, new ones need to be different. Motorino has opened its doors in two prime locations and it is definitely worth making a lot of noise about. From the funky urban metal chairs to the spectacular ingredients and custom-made oven (their pride and joy), Motorino definitely stands out from the crowd.

Coming off the Soho escalator, we were warmly greeted and shown to our table. A chilled **Fever Tree Ginger Beer** (\$48) tickled the tastebuds as we perused the menu. We came for the Motorino main event so saved all our room for pizza. However, the antipasti salads caught our eye for next time.

It would be easy to wax lyrical about the use of the finest extra-virgin olive oil and beautifully aged balsamic vinegar but for us it was Motorino's inventiveness that stood out. On this front, the **fennel**

salad with olives, orange and pecorino (\$118) topped the list, while the **marinated beet salad with ricotta salata, olives, mint and anchovy** (\$98) wasn't far behind; **octopus and potato salad with capers and chili oil** (\$148) was another tantalising offering. We'll be sure to come again soon with a ravenous crowd!

Motorino boasts that they are "honouring the traditions of Naples, the birthplace of pizza". Indeed they do, and with an exciting modern twist. Their custom-made Stefano Ferrara oven cooks pizzas in just 90 seconds at an extremely high heat, so the top is soft and inviting while the crust offers the standout charring that will have customers returning for more.

Another nice touch was that once our daughter Sophia had ordered, she was invited into the kitchen to help make her **meatball pizza** (\$178). On her return she was still giggling at the amazing dough-flinging skills of the pizza chef and was thrilled to have topped her own pizza and watch it come to life in the wood-fire oven.

As well as the outstanding charring, Motorino also prides itself on the

creamiest of buffalo mozzarella, *fior de latte*. It was sensational, and for our other pizza we added sweet sausage, smoked pancetta and roasted peppers from the toppings list. In all, it reaffirmed why this peasant food has become so revered around the world since the first pizzeria opened in Naples in 1830.

The Dolci menu offers *tiramisu* and *torta al cioccolatto* but we were surprised by the ever so willing-to-please staff with a **Nutella and marshmallow calzone**: gooey, sweet indulgence, again with the pockets of charring to really bring it together.

As well as more great salads and pizzas, an exploration of the Motorino wine and cocktail list beckons on our return. Just when you think you've tried it all, it's thrilling to have a new kid on the block surprise you – in this case, with inventiveness, a custom-made oven, and those oh-so-heavenly pizzas.

Karl Woodbury

MUST TRY DISH:

Any pizza (it's all about the base...) 



By Brooke Chenoweth

GIFTS WITH A DIFFERENCE

What do you get when two dapper gents, one with a love of beer and the other a deep appreciation for the world's best chocolate – and both with plenty of business sense – combine their talents?

The Artist: a unique concept that's making gift-giving personal – and delicious!

The day I meet "Mr Generous", Olivier Gilson, and "Mr Temptation", Benjamin Cox – aka "The Gentlemen" – they arrive in their signature bowties and carrying a solid metal briefcase, the kind that attaches to the carrier's wrist with handcuffs, and holds things like nuclear codes and top-secret documents.

It sits on the table between us as we introduce ourselves and exchange polite conversation. But I can't fully concentrate until I know what's inside. Mr Generous obliges and I'm pleasantly surprised when I see that it's a gift. And not just any gift: it's a six-pack of artisanal Belgian beer – with my face on the label! Next, the gents hand me a box of Belgian chocolates, this time with each one bearing an image of my family. We've never looked so divine!

It's not just the fact that you can customise The Artist's products with your favourite photos that makes them so appealing – it's the quality of the products. Each chocolate, for instance, is handcrafted with the finest natural ingredients in Belgium by Master Chocolatier Lionel Focant – otherwise known as "Mr Chocolate". And the three beer varieties – Blonde, White and Raspberry – are also made in Belgium, by a small-scale brewer who uses local, natural ingredients. They're so good that they converted this non-beer drinker into a fan.

In a market that's dominated by names like Ferrero Rocher, Godiva and Lindt, a brand that delivers both a high-quality, artisan product with a unique, personal twist is a welcome find. Olivier says, "With competition so fierce, we realised we needed more than a good product – and it's our customisation that is the key."

To take on the confectionery giants, The Gentlemen jumped into the market headfirst, learning a lot about doing business in Hong Kong along the way. Using their combined talents – from



Benjamin's background in finance to Olivier's experiences as an entrepreneur in the food industry – they set up The Artist 18 months ago, and have been striving ever since to deliver a premium product, with a focus on excellent customer service.

There have been challenges along the way – like launching and attempting to fill orders over Chinese New Year – but they've met these with good humour and common sense. They've learnt that the details are what really matters to customers. And there's something about seeing your face on a delectable little chocolate that instantly wins you over. It also helps that the craft beer is very easy to drink! ☀

Special offer: For *Expat Living* readers, The Artist is offering a HK\$50 discount on orders placed between 1 October and 30 November. Order online at mrtheartist.com and enter the code "expat_Liv_345".

Follow the Gents at mrtheartist.com, on Facebook (MisterTheArtist) or on Instagram (mrtheartist) to find out more about their products.

A CUT ABOVE

By Brooke Chenoweth

So often we bring you reviews of restaurants and news of what's happening on the dining scene; this month, for something different, we're taking a sneak peek into one of Hong Kong's newest kitchens, at **Cecconi's**, and learning a few tips on making ceviche from Head Chef MICHAEL FOX.

I arrive at Cecconi's long before the lunch rush – at a time of day when the restaurant is quiet and pristine. Chef Michael leads me to the kitchen and reveals³ the subject for the day: a whole yellowtail tuna, fresh from Japan. Cecconi's receives these fish three times a week, and while he laments that the fish, which was caught a few days earlier and flown to Hong Kong, would be even fresher if it were sourced locally, he's pleased with its size and quality.

Michael has worked for the likes of culinary giants Raymond Blanc and Shannon Bennett, and since arriving from Australia this summer he's already making his mark at Cecconi's new Wyndham Street location. This includes taking the time to teach his kitchen team how to properly prepare ingredients – including fish. He says, "Cooking is a dying art. Now you can buy everything pre-cut in portions; but I believe it's important for cooks to see food in its natural state."

The fish on the bench is certainly in its natural state, and as Michael removes its innards, I'm beginning to wonder if I should have stayed out of the kitchen!

The next step is cutting the fish, and as Michael pulls out some impressive-looking knives he explains that there's no room for error in this part of the

preparation. "Unlike a cut of beef, which is more robust and can be used in other ways if you slip with the knife, a fish is less forgiving."

I watch quietly and let him concentrate, and as he slices he tells me about each part of the fish. Having never given much thought to which part of the anatomy my tuna steak might come from, it's a real eye opener. The *toro* is the belly of the fish, and is high in fat. Then there's the loin. Michael

"A cut of beef is more robust and can be used in other ways if you slip with the knife; fish is less forgiving."



prefers to serve both cuts in his ceviche – to keep things “texturally interesting”.

Next, he removes the frame, aka the head and spine, and puts it aside for later – it’ll be used to make fish stock; good to see it’s not going to waste. He then expertly removes the skin and a piece of flesh known as the bloodline; a darker pink than the rest of the fish, it’s high in iron and not suitable for this particular dish due to its strong flavour.

What is left after all of this is two long pieces of delicate, pink tuna meat, enough for at least 20 portions of tuna ceviche. Ceviche is a dish that’s popular in Latin America, and it typically uses an acid such as citrus juice or salt to cure and marinate the flesh, as opposed to using heat.

Chef Michael rubs a salt, sugar and spice mix into the fish and refrigerates it for two hours. When he takes it out again, it’s firmer, having lost some of its moisture, and it looks almost as if

it has been cooked. He rinses it, then slices it into bite-sized morsels. Then it’s dressed with blood orange, fennel flower, coriander, finger lime and a blood-orange dressing.

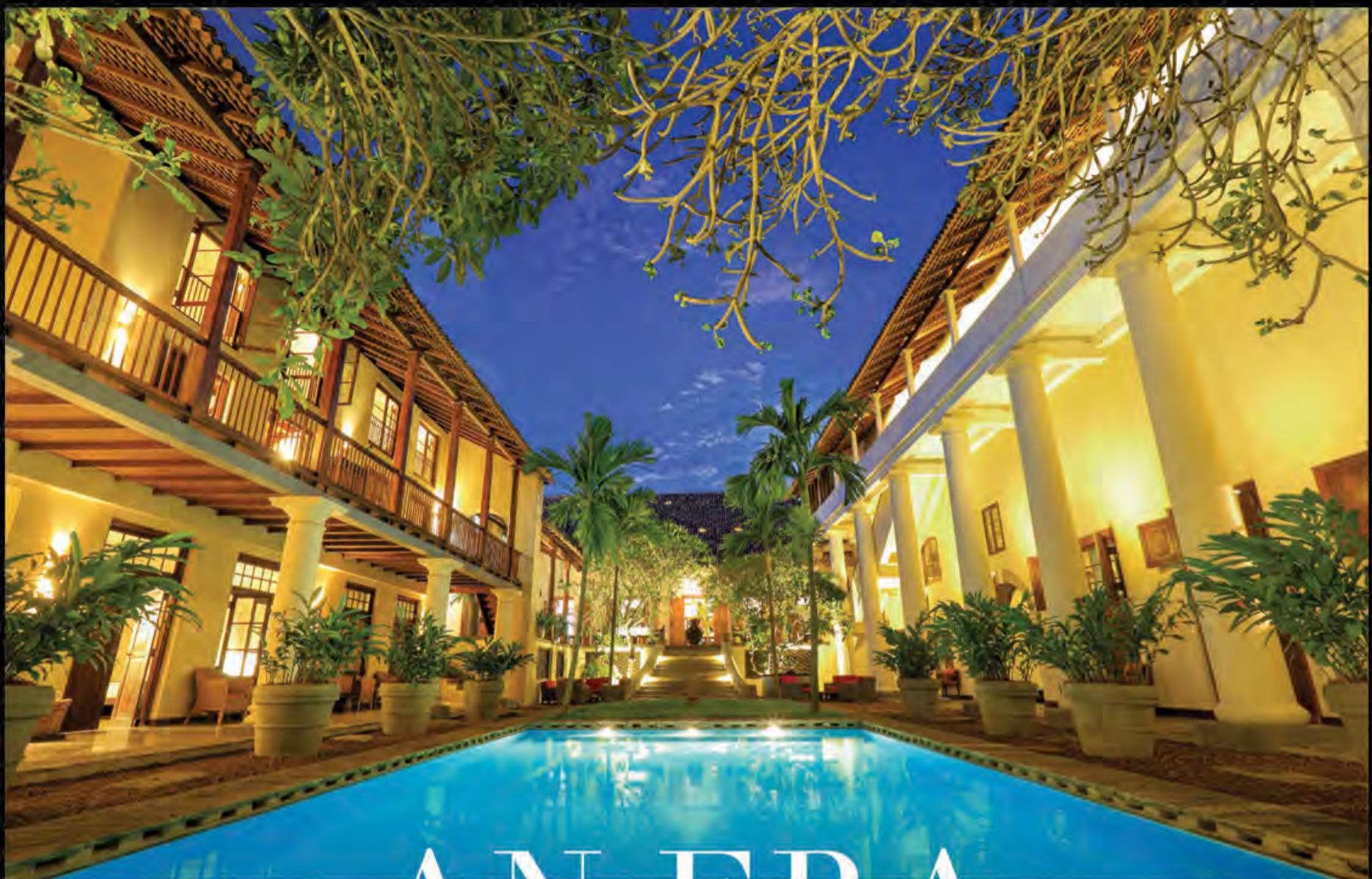
The whole thing smells and tastes like summer; simply delicious. It’s the perfect dish on a hot day: light, refreshing and a real palate cleanser. Michael recommends pairing it with bubbles or a nice white as an appetiser, but since it’s just after 11am, I tuck that helpful tip away for next time.

The ceviche at Cecconi’s is made to order so it’s all as fresh as it possibly can be. It’s a surprisingly straightforward dish, but also a great example of Michael’s skill, and his respect and passion for food. ■

Cecconi’s Italian is at
2/F, 77 Wyndham Street, Central
2565 5300
diningconcepts.com/cecconi



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Travel

Gili Lankanfushi, Maldives (photo: Lightfoot Travel)

WHAT'S NEW

Hot destinations & great holiday ideas

Magical Mauritius

Shangri-La's Le Touessrok Resort & Spa, Mauritius is set to be unveiled on 1 November, following a six-month renovation of the legendary Le Touessrok property. The 200-room hotel is located on the east coast of Mauritius and offers "#nofilter required" views of the Indian Ocean from all guestrooms, suites and villas. Ilot Mangénie is a secluded private island reserved for guests, with pristine beaches, a stylish beach club and on-island butlers. A five-night "Open for Imagination" package includes accommodation in a deluxe suite, champagne on arrival, round-trip airport transfers and island tour by helicopter, a daily Dom Pérignon champagne breakfast, dinner under the stars, daily in-suite couple's treatments by CHI, The Spa, a private romantic sunset cruise on a luxury yacht, and more. Priced from €11,000. Room-only rates start from €265 for stays from 1 November to 19 December. reservations.sltr@shangri-la.co | shangri-la.com



JAPAN WITH JACADA

Jacada Travel, a leading expert in guided travel to Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Polar Regions, has extended its specialist knowledge and expertise to the Land of the Rising Sun. A series of new Japan itineraries offer unique and luxurious experiences in this eclectic, modern-meets-ancient corner of the world. Among the highlights are high-speed bullet trains, traditional hot-spring *onsen*, private tours of *samurai* and *geisha* districts, elaborate *kaiseki* meals, cherry trees in full bloom and more. To browse through the itineraries and learn more, visit jacadatravel.com. ▶



VIETNAM ESCAPE

Only a short flight from Ho Chi Minh City and Hong Kong, **Salinda Resort Phu Quoc Island** is the first luxury resort located right on beautiful Long Beach. The 121 deluxe rooms, suites and villas feature nature-inspired designs and spacious private balconies to make the most of the ocean views, and the F&B offerings include a modern show-kitchen specialising in Italian and Vietnamese cuisine and one of the largest wine cellars in the country. There are plenty of tours and excursions to enjoy – snorkelling and diving adventures, for example – or you can stay and make the most of the Salinda Spa, the only spa in Vietnam operated by a professional team from Thailand, offering a range of timeless therapies and distinctive traditional Thai massages that will put you firmly in holiday mode. salindaresort.com ▲

SINGAPORE BIRTHDAY SPECIALS

It's Singapore's 50th birthday, and to celebrate, the iconic Fullerton Hotel and sister property the Fullerton Bay Hotel are offering golden jubilee promotions (valid till 30 December 2015). The "Fullerton Celebrates SG50" package, from S\$500 (HK\$2,700), includes a night in a Courtyard Room, buffet breakfast for two, complimentary one-way limo transfer, a S\$50 dining credit for the hotel's five restaurants and bars, and more. The "Fullerton Bay Celebrates SG50" package, from S\$650 per night, includes a night in a Deluxe Room with floor-to-ceiling glass windows and private balcony, breakfast for two, a one-way limo transfer, a S\$50 dining credit applicable at four restaurants and bars (including Lantern, named one of the best hotel bars in the world by CNN), and more. fullertonhotel.com | fullertonbayhotel.com ▼



CYCLE VIETNAM

Specialist bicycle tour operator SpiceRoads has introduced a new trip: **Road Biking the Ho Chi Minh Highway**. This 11-day tour includes nine days of cycling up to 150km per day, clocking up a total of 922km, including some challenging climbs on good quality roads (and with minimal traffic). The itinerary follows the former supply route used by the Vietnamese during the war, starting from Hanoi and ending at the magnificent imperial city of Hue. Cost is US\$2,200 (which includes accommodation, meals, and drinks and snacks while riding), and there are multiple departure dates in 2016; bookings for the first of these, 10 January, attract a 10 percent discount. spiceroads.com ▼



New Openings



PORTUGAL

Six Senses Douro Valley marks the first foray of the Six Senses hotel group in Europe. The Portugal property consists of 57 rooms and suites, set in a beautiful area renowned for its vineyards; indeed, this is the oldest demarcated wine region in the world. There are 80 varieties of grapes grown here, and *Wine Spectator* ranked three wines from Douro in its top five in 2014. Fittingly, the property's Six Senses Spa boasts a menu of treatments based on freshly picked grapes and citrus fruits from surrounding orchards. sixsenses.com ▲



BURMA

Five-star **Sedona Hotel Yangon** is launching an expansive addition to its existing luxury property. Set to open in late 2015, the hotel's new wing will add 431 guest rooms and suites, plus a high-end retail experience, fitness centre and spa. Sedona sits on eight acres of landscaped gardens and water features, with views of the Shwedagon Pagoda and Inya Lake; Singapore-based Forum Architects were involved in the design of the new wing, which draws on traditional Burmese culture and art interpreted into elegant, contemporary design. sedonahotels.com.sg ▲

10 Things to Tick Off Your Travel Bucket List

We love a relaxing holiday in Bali or Phuket as much as the next person, but it's invigorating from time to time to explore somewhere new, attempt the unusual and do something that reminds you how exhilarating travel actually is. For inspiration, we asked Hong Kong-based tour operator **Lightfoot Travel** to list ten of their top must-do experiences from around the world.

#1 SPEND A WEEK ON A LIVEABOARD



If you're an avid scuba diver, there's no better way to explore the greatest dive spots in the world than by liveaboard. Many in Asia are made from traditional Indonesian *pinisi* boats made with teak wood, sail for up to a week at a time, and take guests to the most remote and pristine of dive sites.

#3 EXPERIENCE GORILLAS IN THE WILD

A 2011 census recorded less than 900 gorillas living in the wild today, spread over just four national parks in the



Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda. A Lightfoot guest recently returned from Rwanda claiming, "It's a dream come true for an animal lover. You get so close to them and feel like they are observing you instead of the other way around!"

#2 SEE THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

One of Mother Nature's most spectacular sights, the northern hemisphere's Aurora Borealis is caused by colliding, electrically charged particles from the sun entering the earth's atmosphere near its magnetic poles. The best places to view these eerily dancing lights are during the dark winters in Canada, Alaska, Greenland, Iceland and parts of Scandinavia.



#4 BALLOON OVER CAPPADOCIA

The sight of hot-air balloons soaring over just about anything is pretty magical, but there is something almost otherworldly as you watch them float over Cappadocia's fairylike rock formations in Central Turkey.



#5 CRUISE THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

A volcanic archipelago lying 1,000km off the coast of Ecuador, the Galapagos Islands is known to be the world's foremost destination for wildlife-viewing. Boutique cruise ships enable guests to sail up to lesser visited areas, whose isolation has ensured a diversity of plant and animal life found nowhere else on earth. Plus, it inspired Darwin's theory of evolution, so that in itself is pretty special.





#6 STAY IN AN OVERWATER VILLA



For sun and sea lovers, nothing beats stepping right out of your front door and straight into the crystal-clear sea. A direct flight from Hong Kong, the Maldives takes the cake for luxurious water villas, many with private pools and deck areas for lounging, and some with a waterslide entrance into the ocean.

#7 TRY HELISKIING



If you're a skiing enthusiast, why not take the sport to the next level? Heliskiing gives you access to vast amounts of terrain and enables you to ski the most untouched powder, with the added benefit of having the mountains entirely to yourself. The sweeping views as you fly in over the snowy peaks aren't too shabby either.

#8 SET FOOT ON THE ANTARCTIC CONTINENT



The Great White Continent is one of the least explored places in the world, and visits warrant bragging rights even amongst the most seasoned travellers. Camp out on the ice; witness Emperor penguins returning to the sea; hike new routes amidst untouched alpine terrain; or take the plunge and swim in the thermal waters of Deception Island – a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

#9 TREK NEPAL'S ANNAPURNA CIRCUIT

Running between 160 to 230 kilometres and taking over 17 days to complete, the Annapurna trek is one of the most scenic and accessible routes that even amateur hikers can do. The horseshoe-shaped trail takes you through some of the highest and most beautiful peaks in the world, including Annapurna and Dhaulagiri – both over 8,000 metres.



#10 FLY OVER NEW ZEALAND'S SOUTHERN ALPS & MILFORD SOUND



Flying through the gigantic peaks of the Southern Alps from picturesque Queenstown is absolutely breathtaking. On the way out, touch down for a stroll along a glacier, before flying on to the giant fjords of Milford Sound. On the return journey, soar over ancient wooded valleys with fresh rivers flowing down from the mountains. This is nature at its finest.

Lightfoot Travel specialises in family holidays, honeymoons, corporate travel and private villas in countries spanning seven continents. For tailor-made itineraries, contact them at 2815 0068 or visit lightfoottravel.com.

Family Adventure in Myanmar

DANIELLE ROSSETTI fights the urge to do all the travel planning herself, and the result is an action-packed trip for a family of five to one of Southeast Asia's great destinations.

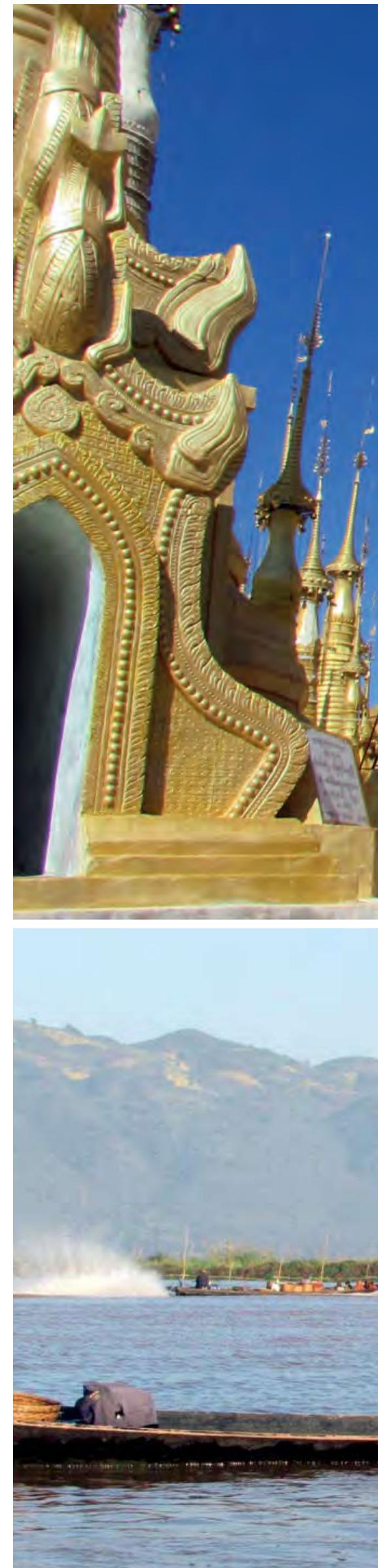
I knew this trip was going to be special when a 44-page briefing document arrived via email. I've always taken a perverse pride in planning a holiday: the hours spent finding the best flight connections, locating TripAdvisor-rated hotels closest to the things we want to see, and hunting down the best restaurants for local cuisine and even the must-try items on the menu.

But with a recently arrived baby, I had tried to book a Myanmar trip a couple of times and it had defeated me. The size of the country – not to mention our always-limited travel window – meant we would need to take internal flights, and the connections and transfers never seemed to match up.

When baby Edwin reached 18 months of age, and our two older boys 8 and 10, we thought it was time to try again.

Travel specialists **Country Holidays** came highly recommended by a colleague and I can certainly see why after using them for our Myanmar adventure. The aforementioned document that they emailed through was more like a mini travel guide, with all relevant background information included, along with details of eight full days of activities tailored to the ages of our children – even taking into account breaks around lunchtime for our baby to nap.

Here are just some of the things we covered.







The capital

In Yangon we stayed at the **Sule Shangri-La**, centrally located just across the road from the Bogyoke Market. This market has everything for locals and tourists alike, and often cheaper prices on jewellery and crafts than we found in the villages where they are made.

The city has some lovely tree-lined streets, two big lakes and an interesting mix of Indian and Chinese architecture. Motorbikes have been banned in the city centre since 2003, so there is a leisurely feel to the place. New money flowing in is bringing big changes though: a huge multi-storey commercial development is opening soon on Inya Lake, opposite Aung San Suu Kyi's house, and more cars are on the roads every day.

The food we had in Yangon and Myanmar in general was a real surprise – very tasty, with an emphasis on fish (in tomato-tamarind based sauces), tempura, stir-fried vegetables and curries. The further north we travelled, the more the cuisine became Chinese-influenced, with leaf-wrapped dumplings and sesame flavours.

On Day 2, we visited an orphanage run by a monastery, where we had the chance to serve lunch to the children. Country Holidays had organised for us to contribute the meat dish and fresh fruit for the meal, and we took lots of stationery items and small gifts for them to give out to the children later. Some of the boys were studying to go to university and loved talking and playing soccer with our kids.

The Shwedagon Pagoda is the cultural highlight of Yangon. It's a

huge, dazzling complex on top of a hill, with lots of gold and as many as 68 stupas and pagodas, all paid for by donations. The central pagoda (being upgraded while we were there) is 110 metres tall, and covered in hundreds of gold plates and over 4,500 diamonds, including a 75-carat diamond in the top; needless to say, it's very impressive. We took the easy walk around the terrace, where locals enjoy bringing picnics and watching the sun set, beneath thousands of crows circling the spires.





Bricks and balloons

The next day involved an early morning flight to **Bagan** – the ancient capital from the 9th to 12th century. There are over 3,000 temples, pagodas and stupas spread over this massive plain along the Irrawaddy River. The locals moved out 25 years ago and created New Bagan, which is where the hotels are, but it's easy to get to and around the temple area – whether by bicycle, electric bike, horse and cart, or car and driver.

Bagan Lodge is a very new and beautifully planned hotel, with spacious, freestanding villas housing two interconnecting rooms, perfect for a family. I wish we could have stayed here longer to enjoy the space and the pool.

We saw too many temples to provide specific details, but the overall feel of Bagan is as though a giant has scattered “stones” or temples across the plain, and they have been left to weather and age over time, tumble-down but still bearing traces of their former glory. We saw incredible frescoes (some being uncovered from the lime which residents



covered them with to save them from marauders), gold and red spires, and an ancient palace being dug from the earth, its layout shown by rows and rows of red bricks and holes where columns had been placed.

Staff at the hotel looked after Edwin the next morning as we left at 4am for a hot air balloon adventure. **Balloons over Bagan** operates a fleet of deep burgundy-coloured balloons, with traditional French baskets capable of carrying 14 passengers and the pilot (ours a jovial Englishman called Graeme) on a floating journey over the treetops as the sun

rises over the plain. This was a magical experience – the fog burning off as the sun rose, its light bathing the temples in a bright golden-terracotta glow. Not a bump nor a drop, just a calm, floating sensation with the occasional “sssshhhhhhh”, as the flame was increased to lift us over the trees if we got too low.

A horse and buggy delivered us to the port of the river later that afternoon, and we watched the sun go down over the Irrawaddy, with a picnic basket and watermelon cocktails aboard one of the old, brightly painted wooden boats that ply the river with tourists on board.



Languid lake

The following morning we took a flight to the Shan State (Heho), near Inle Lake; then a drive to the colonial mountain village of Kalaw, with its hollyhocks, crab apples and English cottages, plus a cooler temperature and clear skies. Quite surreal.

The boys visited a sanctuary for retired elephants, washed the elephants in the river and played soccer with the mahouts afterwards. The elephants are released into the jungle each night to forage for themselves; the place is not set up for tourists, so you feel like you're involved in a real part of the working day.

Inle Lake, our final stop in Myanmar, is almost 3,000 feet above sea level, which makes for amazingly clear skies and huge white cloud formations. The vivid orange sunsets we watched each night from our balcony at the beautiful **Villa Inle** were breathtaking.

Not knowing what to expect on arrival, we were bundled on to one long-tail boat, and our luggage on to another. The only way to get to the lake hotels (most on stilts over the water, ours on the shore) is by these boats. With no time to worry, we strapped the little one into his life jacket and were off!

The water was glassy both days we were there, and we loved the sense of calm that lay over the lake, with the famous Intha fishermen standing in their boats, paddling with one leg as they pull in the nets.

Over 100,000 people live on or around the lake, which is around 22km long and 10km wide. Villages are built on top of piles of weeds that are dug up from the bottom of the lake and then floated; it's then topped with soil, on which the local people grow vegetables, raise pigs, and build thatched or wooden houses with satellite dishes, bars, restaurants and post offices.

We loved visiting the village “factories” and watching the old ladies weaving silk or lotus root thread, or rolling cheroots while they laughed and chatted. Everywhere we went, children ran out to wave and greet us.

The renowned “forest pagodas” of Indein are a 30-minute trip away up one of the lake's tributary creeks, followed by a 10-minute walk. Here, hundreds of



stupas are clustered around a hill, some tumbling down, others being restored – painted gold, whitewashed or simply having their red bricks replaced. This is another very quiet, calm place – a light wind gently stirring the leaves on the trees is all you can hear.

Homeward bound

Our last day involved a series of connections: a 7am long-tail boat from the hotel, a minibus to the airport, our flight to Yangon, a minibus to a park for the kids to play and have lunch, another minibus out to the airport, then finally home by around 10pm.

It was an incredibly long day to end on, but also fitting in a way, in view of the amazing number of sights and experiences that we'd been able to cram into our eight-day Myanmar trip, thanks to Country Holidays and their amazing tour guides. We definitely couldn't have seen or done half as much if we'd booked this trip on our own, no matter how long I spent planning it. ☺

Country Holidays currently has 10 different Myanmar trips on offer, ranging from four to 11 days. To book one of these or to talk to them about a customised trip, call 2525 9199 or visit countryholidays.com.hk.

THE SLOPES IN STYLE



Scott Dunn

ANYTHING ELSE IS JUST A HOLIDAY

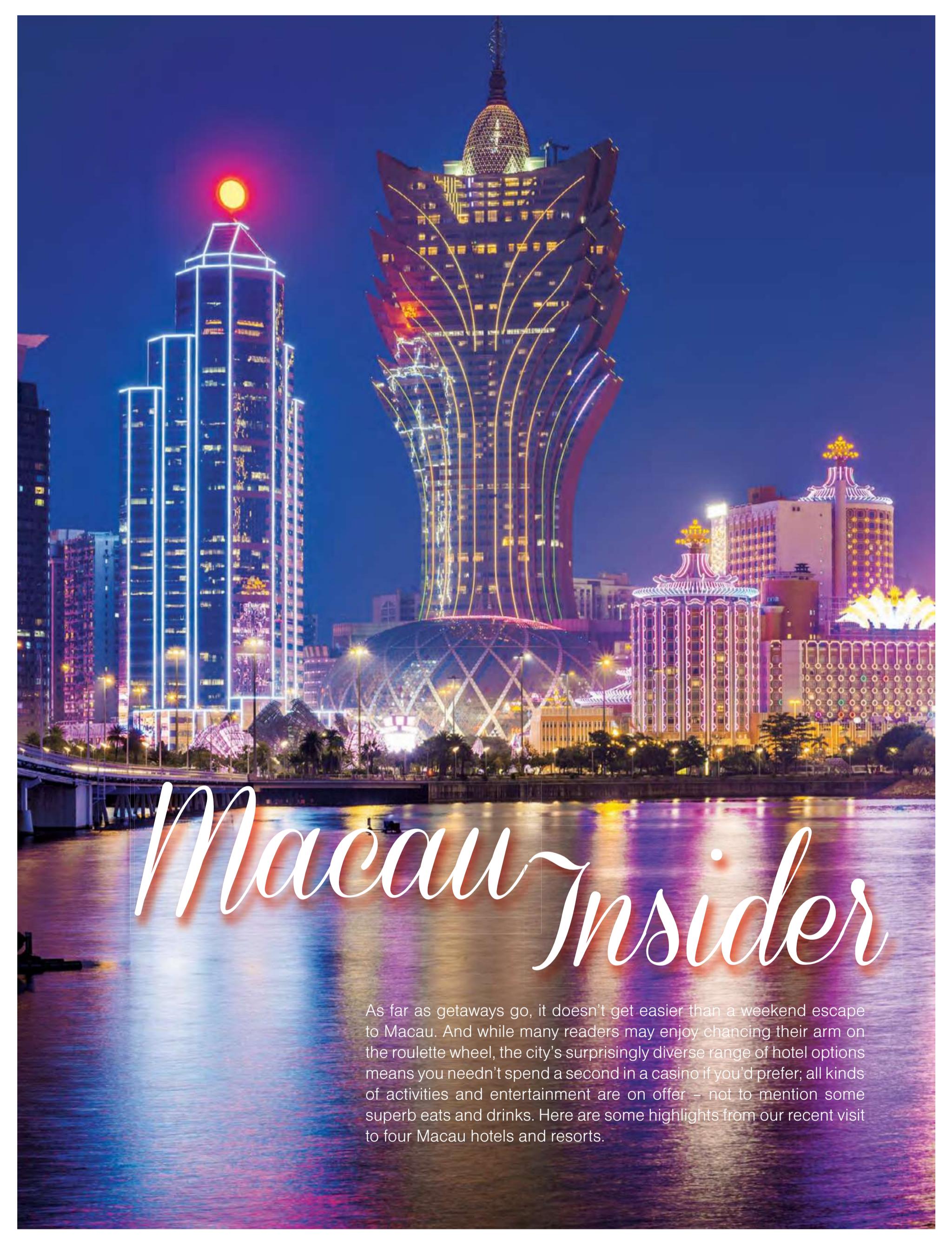
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Macau Insider

As far as getaways go, it doesn't get easier than a weekend escape to Macau. And while many readers may enjoy chancing their arm on the roulette wheel, the city's surprisingly diverse range of hotel options means you needn't spend a second in a casino if you'd prefer; all kinds of activities and entertainment are on offer – not to mention some superb eats and drinks. Here are some highlights from our recent visit to four Macau hotels and resorts.

#1 Sheraton Macao Hotel Cotai Central

By Kate Farr



We recently visited the Sheraton Macao with a four-year-old and a four-month-old, and found that, far from being just a hard-gambling destination, Macau's increasing number of entertainment options make for a stress-free family getaway.

Checking in

Arriving on an early morning CotaiJet, we checked into our Family Suite at the Sheraton Macao, consisting of a large king bedroom for us and a bright DreamWorks-themed bedroom for the kids. With the kids' room featuring a double bunk below and single on top, you could easily sleep five in the suite (or six with an optional baby cot), making this a great option if you're travelling with a larger gang.

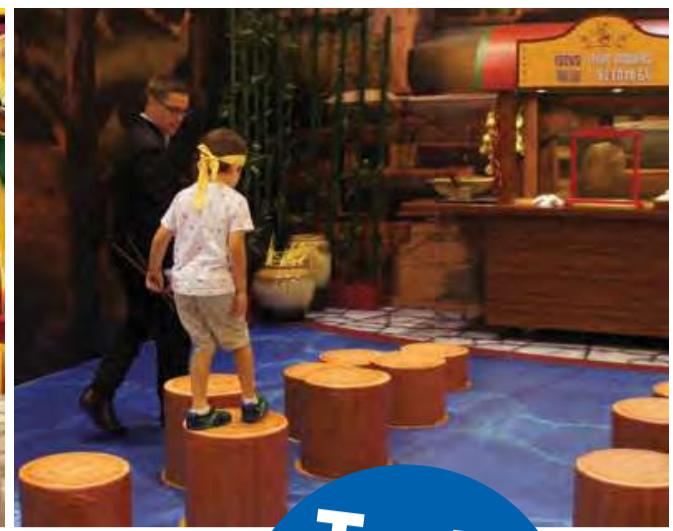
Once the beds had been thoroughly tested out and the panda towel-art in the bathroom admired, it was time to enjoy a buffet brunch at the Sheraton's Italian restaurant, Bene (see next page), before our afternoon's activities.

Junior Hotelier

The Sheraton's Junior Hotelier programme offers kids up to 12 years a taste of hotel life, with a range of hands-on, age-appropriate activities including (mocktail-only!) bartending, cooking and even checking in guests. Our eldest boy got to try out a touch of housekeeping, learning how to make up a bed and even trying out some of that towel art



for himself. Kids attending the programme get to take home a goodie bag including a smart T-shirt and apron, as well as that all-important certificate for the portfolio!



Next came a visit to the daily DreamWorks parade, where the cartoon characters, accompanied by stilt walkers and puppets, wound their way through the Sands complex, enabling the kids to get up close and personal with their movie favourites.

The most important meal of the day

Speaking of which, we were initially drawn to the Sheraton as we'd heard great things from friends about the daily "Shrekfast". This fun foodie activity enables kids to meet – and eat – with the DreamWorks gang first thing in the morning. Although our eldest son was initially nervous around the larger-than-life characters, the extensive buffet – and in particular the unlimited pancakes – soon cheered him up.

Kung Fu fighting

Our final stop was at the Kung Fu Panda Academy, located in a vast space that allows kids to climb, kick and run to their hearts' content, but also encourages discipline and patience through a series of fun challenges, culminating in a face-to-face meet-and-greet with Po himself!

Our son loved this so much that we're now looking into martial arts classes for him, so if your little one needs to channel his or her energies, I'd definitely suggest checking it out. The Junior Hotelier and Kung Fu Panda programmes will both run until the end of the year; Shrekfast is on-going year-round.

Family downtime

And it's not all about the kids. During our stay, I managed to squeeze in a heavenly massage at Shine Spa, where treatments are allocated according to your Fung Shui element and take place in airy, tranquil rooms that come complete with private steam showers.

We were also all big fans of our Chinese hotpot dinner at Xin, where a seafood buffet allows pickier eaters the opportunity to tailor-make their perfect dinner while trying out something new. And we enjoyed plenty of downtime in the Sheraton's Sala and Jaya pools, which are designed so that little ones have safe splashy fun, along with shady poolside cabanas to escape the midday heat.

If you're looking for a family-focused weekend with activities galore, the Sheraton Macao is a fabulous – and fuss-free – option that's just a short ferry ride away.

Taste Test



Bene at Sheraton Macao Hotel

During our stay at the Sheraton we enjoyed a surprisingly family-friendly Sunday brunch at Bene, the hotel's Italian trattoria. Consisting of an extensive buffet of seafood, salads, freshly made pastas and the authentic pizzas for which the restaurant is renowned, Bene's Sunday brunch also allows guests to select dishes from a menu of Italian classics, freshly cooked to order.

We enjoyed a selection of antipasti, including cured meats, cheeses and olives to start, followed by *baccala* – salt cod – with tomato and avocado compote, an egg frittata and a serving of green asparagus and parmesan that was so delicious that we ordered another.

I found our main of wild mushroom lasagne a little heavy for my taste, although my husband enjoyed the earthy flavours and my son the cheesy topping. We all enjoyed the slow-cooked lamb with caramelised onions and parmesan polenta. However, the standout dish was the marinated beef with truffled mash that everyone, including our four-year-old, declared delicious.

Desserts were another highlight, with Bene's wide selection of delicate pastries and cakes proving a huge distraction (and a huge hit!) with all of us. The raspberry profiteroles were creamy and tangy in equal measure, while the nitrogen ice-cream station captivated our little man with its sci-fi clouds of dry ice. As we had an afternoon of activities lined up, I enjoyed a warm chocolate soufflé topped with boozy marinated cherries in lieu of a glass of wine, although there's also a free-flow drinks package if you're planning on lingering a little longer.

The buffet set-up and smaller portion sizes make this an ideal choice if you're visiting with kids, and at HK\$458 for adults and HK\$229 for children, is excellent value for a great quality brunch.

Must-try dish: Slow-cooked beef with truffled mash

Sheraton Macao is at Estrada do Istmo, s/n, Cotai, Sands Cotai Central, Macau.
+853 2880 2000 | sheratonmacao.com



#2 Grand Lapa Macau

By Kate Farr



For a quick and easy weekend break that steers clear of airport queues and offers something a little different to Cotai's mega-casinos, the historic Grand Lapa Macau is a great family option with a laid-back resort vibe.

Room with a view

The Grand Lapa Macau is situated just five minutes from Macau's downtown TurboJet pier; we took the 10.45am ferry from Hong Kong and were happily settled into our room by 12.15pm, leaving us plenty of time to enjoy our afternoon.

We stayed in a one-bedroom suite, which offered ample space for our king bed, a baby crib for the littlest member of the party and a rollaway for our four-year-old. Although the décor could use a little updating, our room was large, clean and comfortable, with the added bonus of a large balcony overlooking the resort's large pool and landscaped gardens.

Thai Thai

Dropping off our bags, we headed downstairs to NAAM, the Grand Lapa's Thai restaurant, for lunch. The food here is authentic and offers a range of options in a charming colonial-style restaurant – think slowly rotating ceiling fans and a central water feature with real fish that absolutely delighted our boy! The highlight here was the kids' bento box set, which included spring rolls, satay

sticks, Phad Thai and stir-fried veggies, and which was easily large enough for Mum and Dad to steal a forkful or two.

Jump around

Next door to NAAM is Kids Co., the Grand Lapa's kids' club, which has ample indoor and outdoor space to play, including a bouncy castle, indoor soft-play zone and – most exciting of all for our Hong Kong boy – a huge lawn to run on. If you're after five minutes of peace during your stay then you can drop off little ones aged three and over with the fully trained staff – guests get two hours of access per day included in their stay.

Time to unwind

Happily, that two-hour kids' club window provides just the right amount of time you'll need at the spa! I hit the steam room and vitality pool before sampling the 60-minute scrub and massage, which took place in a treatment room that opened out onto a secluded outdoor shower and Jacuzzi area in the hotel's garden. The scrub did a great job of smoothing my dry skin, while the Aromatherapy Associates massage unknotted me sufficiently to start dozing off.

Tea and cake

Luckily it was time for a brief sugar hit at Café Bela Vista, where we enjoyed afternoon tea in an airy, colonial setting before heading up for a quick change before dinner. Café Bela Vista's buffet is a good option for those visiting with kids over a weekend as there's a wide



variety of choices on offer; otherwise if you're looking for something a little more formal, Kam Lai Heen serves up traditional Cantonese fare in a rather ritzy setting.

A splashing good time

Forget the spa, the food or even the kids' club; the Grand Lapa's fabulous pool is the real reason you'll want to visit with children. Surrounded by lush tropical plants and with plenty of loungers available (sun-worshippers, take note!), the pool features a large shallow area for little ones, a deeper section for serious swimming, an outdoor whirlpool and a water slide that runs into a deep, but not too deep, pool complete with cooling waterfall. It's no exaggeration to say that no amount of bribes, cajoling or threats could persuade our four-year-old to get out, and so our entire Sunday was spent splashing and sunning ourselves until it was time to check out for our ferry ride back to Hong Kong.

Grand Lapa Macau is at 956-1110 Avenida da Amizade, Macau. +853 2856 7888 | grandlapa.com



BANYAN TREE
— Lijiang —

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Your stay begins at Banyan Tree Lijiang. On arrival you will be touched by the grandeur of Jade Dragon Snow Mountain and the warm welcome of our caring associates.

Once settled into your villa accommodation, have a relaxing evening in Wen Hai lounge and enjoy the food and beverage delights of Bai Yun or Ming Yue restaurants.

After breakfast the following day, let us tempt the adventurer in you as you discover the sights and sounds of Na' xi culture with a private guided tour in the nearby Shuhe and Dayan ancient towns. Their cobble streets, flowing waterways and wooden buildings are infused with history and cultural richness. A foot massage or caring spa treatment could be the perfect way to end the day.

On day three we will arrange a private transfer to Banyan Tree Ringha, traveling along the spectacular Yangtze river gorge before you climb up onto the high plateau of Shangri-La county, a Tibetan autonomous prefecture. There are many unique and picturesque vantage points to capture the best photographs of the region.

Perched above a flowing river, Banyan Tree Ringha offers a soulful experience of the Shangri-La county as we take you to the local villages and dine with the locals.

When rested, we have the iconic six wisdoms of the Na' xi people to share, an blessing and make a wish before taking the scenic route back to Lijiang.

Our attentive associates will offer aperitif treats or spa treatments in a clear star filled night sky. In China where you can have dinner with the locals after dinner and enjoy a traditional tea ceremony as they recount their stories.

Your final send off will be a special one as the local team will conduct a traditional ceremony at the end of your time with us. Enjoy the friendly ambience the Shangri-La region has to offer, your dining choices, and the many other memorable stay. As the saying goes, "If you travel to Yunnan, be surprised by the beauty and the extra touches afforded to you."



Stay Period: From now on until 31 March 2016

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BANYANTREE.COM



#3 Banyan Tree Macau

By Karl & Sophia Woodbury

How would the soothing, intimate and blissfully tranquil experience of a typical Banyan Tree visit fit in amongst the Las Vegas-style glitz and glamour of modern day Macau? An overnight stay is the only way to find out.

After our taxi approached the bold exterior of gold and mirrored glass – Banyan Tree is part of the Galaxy complex – we were politely ushered in to the grand and opulent lobby area.

It's fair to say that the resort doesn't have the typical look or feel of a Banyan Tree property. At the same time, the staff very much do their brand and profession proud. From being helped out of our taxi to checking in and all throughout our overnight family stay in a Grand Cotai Suite King, they were extremely courteous and obliging.

Then, as the lift doors opened on our floor, Banyan Tree's true colours revealed themselves: soft lighting and subtle touches of tasteful Asian luxury. The contrast was rather clever and exciting, like we had found the elusive lost city of gold.

Once the door to our suite was unlocked, so were our feelings of exhilaration. Our Grand Cotai Suite King boasted floor-to-ceiling tinted glass with stunning views of the new Cotai city. Along that amazing "Macau flatscreen" was a long and



decadent in-suite relaxation pool bookended by sumptuous daybeds. A pillar close by nicely separated the lounge and sleeping area with *actual* flatscreens on each side.

The staff kindly added a single bed for our eight-year-old daughter Sophia but in truth a family of four could camp on the luxurious king-size bed. A round wooden barrel-style bathtub was incredibly inviting, and the smallest room was neatly hidden away with range of extras including heated seat, automatic flushing and other features we were unaccustomed to.

There was a rather nice surprise waiting for us in the spacious double-head shower, too. Aside from the usual lovely array of Banyan Tree lotions and potions, the ceiling held the greatest allure: another two large shower-heads that gently cascade and caress with a gentle rainforest spraying. Bliss!

The resort's multi award-winning Spa is home to therapists formally trained at the Banyan Tree Spa Academy in Bintan, Indonesia. The signature treatment here is the Rainmist experience, a steam bath and rainshower to prepare you for your favourite chosen treatment. As time was short, we weren't able to indulge, but it's top of our list for next time.

The reason for our time being limited will now become clear. Right outside the Banyan Tree is the world's largest Skytop Resort Deck, at over 75,000 square metres, with the world's largest wave pool, world's longest river ride at 575 metres, Macau's only Skytop waterslide, and Kidz Island, Macau's largest aqua play area. Needless to say, Sophia was beside herself with excitement. The fun never stopped in what was an amazing day.

Next time, we may take up Banyan Tree's Cabana Chill-Out offer, so we can enjoy day-use of a Cabana for four people from 10am to 6pm. Prices start from MOP1,500 (approximately HK\$1,500), however, the Cabana rate includes a generous MOP1,000 credit for food and beverage. Food for thought...

We had very high expectations of Banyan Tree and I can honestly say there aren't enough superlatives to describe our family's 24-hour stay; the Grand Cotai Suite now reigns as king of all our hotel experiences.



Saffron at Banyan Tree Macau

We had made reservations at Saffron, Banyan Tree's Thai restaurant and its renowned excellence for quality and innovation didn't disappoint. Alaskan crab, lobster, jumbo tiger prawns and Australian wagyu beef dotted the enticing menu.

Our family feast began with Thai satay *ruam* (\$168): gently charred skewers of beef and chicken on a miniature barbecue with a piquant peanut sauce and lightly pickled cucumber salad – beautifully tender and well balanced.

We then opted for a family serving of grilled wagyu beef with wok-fried okra (\$568). The chef deftly showcased the succulent

beef with perfectly spiced notes from the crunchy okra. The slow-roasted pork spare ribs with ginger, black pepper and honeycomb sauce (\$198) was every bit as intense as we had hoped. Crispy pork with kailan and oyster sauce (\$138) was the perfect savoury foil, with the vibrant green kailan as welcome as all the other palate-tingling delights.

For a Thai twist on a French classic, our dessert was *sangkaya* (\$78), a coconut crème brûlée with ginger syrup. All the best of Asia and an absolute triumph. Saffron is considered the world's most prized spice, and it's a perfect name for this restaurant, and Banyan Tree Macau on the whole; both of them are guaranteed to spice up your life.



Must-try dish: Grilled wagyu beef with wok-fried okra

Taste
Test



#4 Grand Coloane Resort

By Brooke Chenoweth

The glitz and glamour of the big casinos, the fine-dining and the luxury shopping may lure many tourists to Macau, but for the rest of us who are just looking for a quiet escape, the Grand Coloane Resort offers the perfect family getaway.

T ranquillity and rejuvenation aren't words you generally associate with a weekend in Macau, but this hidden gem of a resort offers exactly that. Located on the southern tip of Taipa, with the green hills of the country park behind, and nothing but the South China Sea in front, the Grand Coloane is the only resort in Macau that is casino-free. It's a nice change from the chaos of the Cotai Strip.

The ferry from Central takes 55 minutes, and there's one every 15 minutes, so there's no need to stress about missing one. Despite a slightly seasick three-year-old, the journey was easy enough and we were in Macau before we knew it.

A complimentary shuttle bus takes you from the pier to the resort in around half an hour. While the resort is literally five minutes from the strip, it feels a million miles away – shiny towering hotels quickly give way to green parks and views of Hac Sa Beach.

The Grand Coloane was once The Westin Hotel, and since rebranding they've only done minor touch-ups. In some places it looked a little shabby, but for the most part it was clean and

comfortable, with a "lived-in" feel that only added to the charm. The resort has 208 rooms of varying sizes, each one with a small terrace and a view (of either the beach or the sea). Our family of four had a suite for the weekend and it was huge! Even with an extra bed for the boys, we had plenty of room.

We started our weekend with a dim-sum lunch at Kwun Hoi Heen, a new culinary experience for our three- and six-year-olds, and it was all very good – we even tried a few new things.

It happened to be the hottest day of the year so we spent the rest of the afternoon in the indoor and outdoor pools. The outdoor pool has a small toddler pool and a Jacuzzi, so it was the best place for our needs. The Poolside Bar also made sure we didn't go hungry (or thirsty) while swimming. The team at the kids' club had set up a giant slip n' slide in the garden, and while it looked like fun, it proved a little too adventurous for our boys. The indoor kids' club, though, was a big hit, as was the bouncy castle set up during brunch. There's a

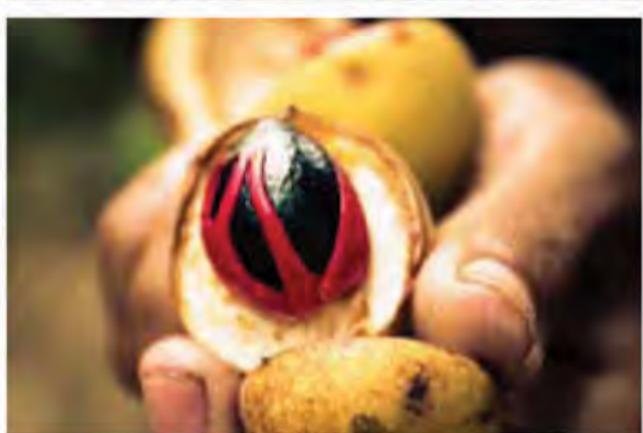


spa for adults; it offers basic services but the massages were excellent and added to the feeling of a "proper" holiday.

Most of the dining is buffet-style, with Café Panorama offering breakfast, brunch and dinner. There were a variety of Italian dishes at dinner and a mixture of Asian and Western options for breakfast; the weekend brunch was a barbecue, which our boys loved. If you're staying longer than a weekend, the buffet could get a little boring, but there are plenty of options just a shuttle bus ride away.

We left reluctantly on Sunday, but felt like we had really gotten away. It was nice to find a resort in Macau that caters for families, rather than high-rolling gamblers and tourists. We will definitely be back. ■

Grand Coloane Resort is at 1918 Estrada de Hac Sa, Coloane.
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SARAH RICHARD discovers the diving world's "best-kept secret".



Photos by Sarah Richard and Manta Ray Bay Resort



You've probably already asked yourself (and the person sitting next to you), "Where's Yap?" So let's get that sorted first.

Yap is located in the Caroline Islands of the Western Pacific Ocean, and is a part of the Federated States of Micronesia. Micronesia is made up of approximately 2,100 islands, the largest of which is Guam.

It's also a lot closer to Hong Kong than it might seem: my flight to Guam took less than five hours. Arriving in such a short period of time in a country that's part of the US felt very strange. However, the American pancakes and bottomless coffee were a much-appreciated treat during my one-night layover in Guam's Santa Fe Hotel.

The next day, after an additional 70-minute flight, we were greeted at the airport at Yap with a traditional flower garland or *lei*. Swiftly escorted to Manta Ray Bay Resort by complimentary shuttle (10 minutes), I was one step further – though I didn't know it yet – to fulfilling a lifetime dream of diving with manta rays.

My room looked out onto the ocean and although the sun had set I could just tell that there was something different about this place; my first dive would be starting at 8am and I contemplated not even sleeping and waiting on the harbour with my fins on, ready to dive in. But jetlag had its own ideas.

When the day dawned I saw a huge boat moored next to the resort; "Why is there a 55-metre schooner right here?" I wondered. Moving closer, I heard a voice say, "Miss Sarah, that's where you will be eating breakfast". And she wasn't joking; before I knew it, I was enjoying a freshly made omelette on the bottom deck of an Indonesian schooner, named *Mnuw*, watching the sun come up while coffee was brought to my table. I guess I've had worse Wednesdays.

Brad, the resort's underwater photographer, sat with me and explained the week's itinerary. He had me at "shark dive"; the rest was a blur of "Sorry, when are we going shark diving?" and "Okay, that sounds great" and "When are



"we seeing the manta rays?" I'll admit when it comes to diving I'm like an over-excitable puppy – and I have been since I first put a regulator in my mouth eight years ago. To me, scuba diving is the most fantastic thing on the planet, and it seemed everyone at Manta Ray Bay Resort agreed.

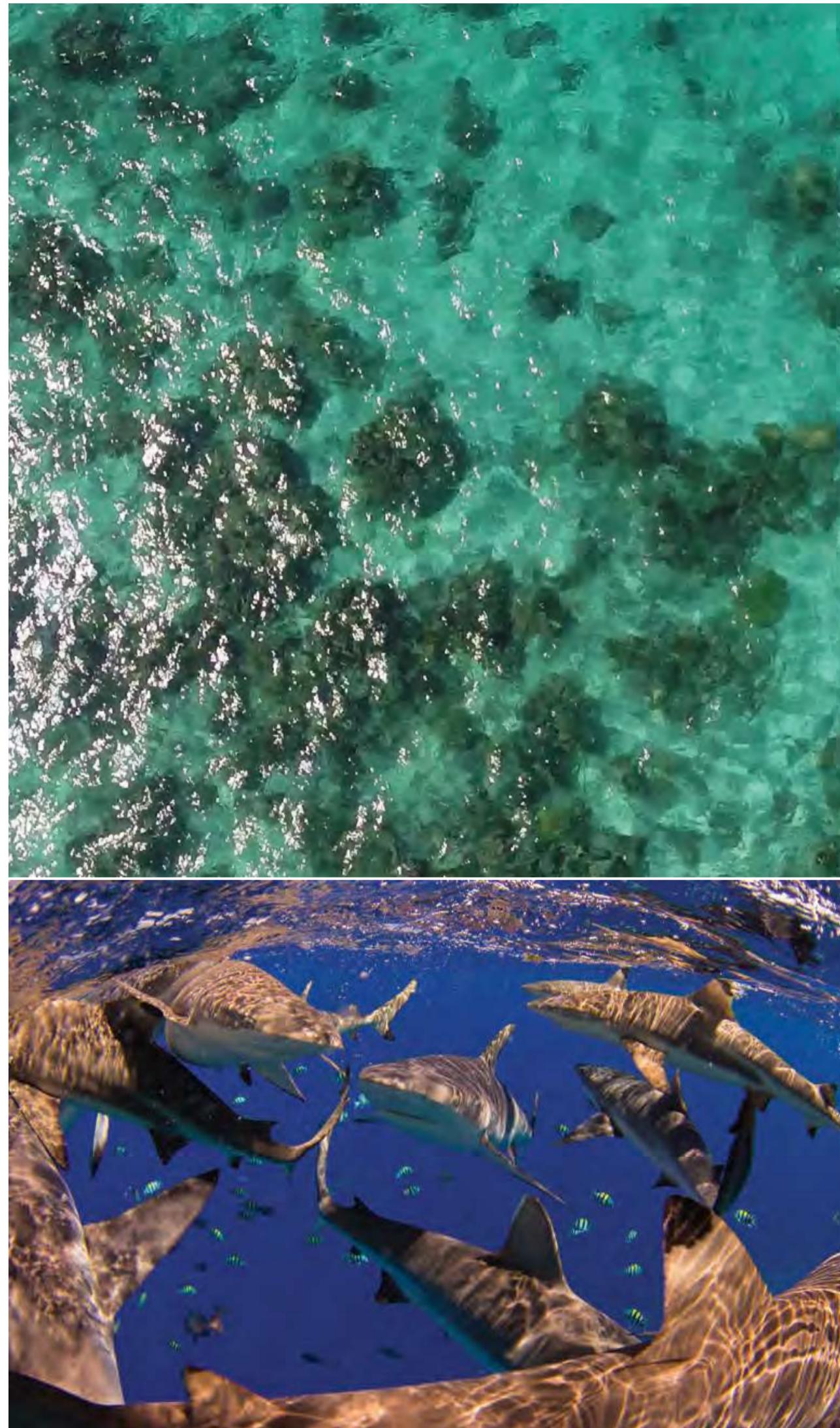
Boats go out every day at around 8am, 10.30am or, for a night dive, 7pm. You can choose whether you want to do a two-tank or a three-tank day. If you choose three tanks, lunch is also provided on the boat.

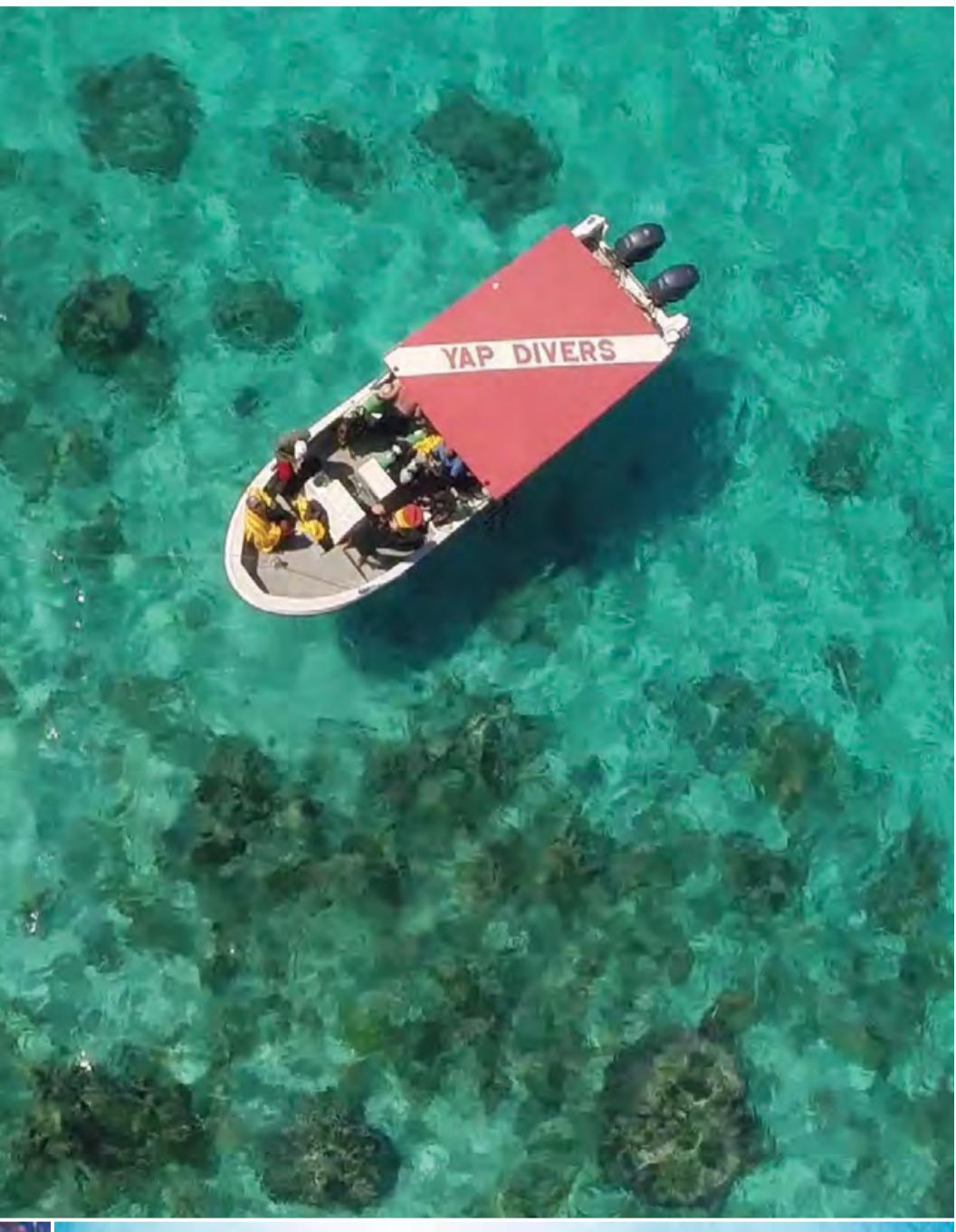
With around 50 dive sites in Yap, you're spoilt for choice. You can choose which sites you want to go to on which days, and a schedule is put up every evening for you to see. Inevitably, one boat heads to the manta cleaning station each day. Although they can't guarantee mantas, there are only distant memories of days without sightings. It's safe to say, within your week at Manta Ray Bay Resort, you are highly likely to see them.

And when you do, you won't believe your eyes. For me, they're the most beautiful creatures in the ocean; nothing can prepare you for the euphoric feeling of being in their presence.

There was more excitement in store: my next dive was at Vertigo, a drop-off dive that's home to dozens of black-tip and white-tip reef sharks. While not as majestic as mantas, sharks are fascinating to watch – and, happily, they're more scared of you than you are of them. They kept their distance as we floated through their world, and our mutual respect was rewarded by a display of 25 sharks going about their everyday lives. Yap is a great place to try shark diving for the first time as the conditions are perfect and the guides extremely experienced.

I did at least two dives every day, seeing a variety of wildlife and corals; the water was warm enough that I didn't need a wetsuit. Not a day went by without a pod of dolphins following the boat for a time, and we were even fortunate enough to see pilot whales. On one occasion, we jumped into snorkel with the dolphins, and we followed a pod for a good half hour in the open ocean. This was one of my most magical





Five minutes with...

Underwater photographer Brad Holland (originally from LA, working with Manta Ray Bay Resort for the past three years)

What drew you to Yap and what made you stay?

It completely appealed to my adventurous side; I found it alluring that no one really knew about it – most divers had been to the Philippines or Thailand, but hardly anyone had been to Yap. Once I got here, I realised it had everything the modern world had and everything I needed, but in perfect harmony with nature. I feel very lucky to have found such a great place to work and live, and I get to meet people from all over the world.

Best thing about working and living in Yap?

The diving! The waters are uncrowded and the interactions with the animals are very personable – it's unlike anywhere else in the world. I have mantas swimming above my head on a daily basis. Also, once you're out of the water, the traditional community is so welcoming and open to foreigners. Ninety percent of people here live a traditional life, sustained by the land and ocean; I love being a part of that.

Tell us more about the mantas.

Yap is the world's first government-backed manta ray sanctuary; this has ensured the manta population has stayed the same year after year. We have a manta ID database to track their lives, so we know their social behaviour, and whether or not one of them is pregnant or has been bitten by a shark. Regulations stop boats and divers from disrupting the behaviour and habitat of the mantas, which means divers get a once-in-a-lifetime experience. It isn't a sighting but an *interaction* – one that's unlikely to be possible anywhere else in the world.

What else can guests expect to see on dives?

Well, if you're getting bored of the mantas (you won't!) there are beautiful hard and soft corals on all of our dive sites, along with schools of fish, moray eels, eagle rays and turtles. Another popular dive site is Vertigo, where you can be surrounded by dozens of white-tip and black-tip sharks at any point. We even had a whale shark sighting last month. Dolphins ride along with us all year round, and orcas have shown up, too.

What kind of diver should come to Yap?

All of them! From novice to expert, we've had them all. The diving is easy, making it perfect for beginners, but it can always be made more challenging by going to deeper sites. Our boat captains and dive guides know the sites inside out. You tell us what kind of diving you want and we'll strive to give you what you want.



experiences in Yap – and completely unexpected.

With my dives over, I would relax back on the *Mnuw*, drinking coffee and talking all things scuba with other guests. One day, I went to check out Manta Ray's own private beach, with picture-perfect white sand and hundreds of palm trees shading me from the afternoon sun. The resort owns a cute section of the beach, where it has added a sitting hut, restroom and barbecue spot, along with optional hire of kayaks and snorkels – and not another soul for miles. Another day I decided to treat myself in the Taro Leaf Spa; I opted for a full body massage with coconut oil and came out smelling like an exotic goddess.

Among the most enduring features of my time at Manta Ray Bay Resort were the





little added extras. When you think about going on a diving holiday, you rarely think about the hotel itself – more about what awaits underwater. However, Manta Bay has created a sanctuary that's not only the perfect place for divers, but also non-divers. I could've easily entertained myself wandering around the local villages, kayaking out to the mangroves and reading a book by the infinity pool for the whole week without even picking up a tank.

From the freshly baked cookies, home-brewed beer and locally made coconut oil, to the banana bread on the boat and the way the towels are folded into mantas, it all added up to the ultimate holiday – one that allowed me to live out a childhood dream and left me with precious memories.



FACT FILE

GETTING THERE There are four flights a week from HK to Guam (Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday); United Airlines is the sole carrier to Yap (70 minutes; Tuesday, Saturday). Manta Ray Bay Resort then escorts you to the resort. For flight deals, contact the resort directly (yapdivers@mantaray.com).

COST Manta Ray Bay Resort's standard package costs US\$1,419, including seven nights' accommodation, with buffet breakfast, five days' diving (two dives per day), airport transfers and taxes. Extras include Nitrox, shark-feeding dives, a third tank and night dives. Room-only rates start from \$149 per night.

DINING The *Mnuw* is the most unique restaurant in Micronesia, if not the world. She's a 55m Indonesian *pinisi* schooner with three dining decks, two bars and a kitchen. Breakfast is included in all packages, and you can unwind after a full day of activities with a cold homebrew or a coconut. Freshly caught fish is served every day, and there are vegetarian options and a kids' menu. Head upstairs to the rooftop bar to end the day with a cocktail or another glass of beer.

SPA The Taro Leaf Spa takes the best of everything that is Yapese to bring you an experience that will leave you relaxed, invigorated and harmonised. The décor is based on island themes, and all the products use locally sourced plants. A range of treatments is available, and they can fit in around your diving schedule.

WHEN TO COME Mantas can be seen all year round; however, the best manta diving is in the mating season, from December through to April. The climate in Yap is hot and humid – the annual average temperature is 27 degrees Celsius, and the average water temperature is 28.

DIVING COURSES Yap is a perfect place to learn to dive or to advance your diving career. Junior Open Water courses are available for children from age 10. Open Water (your first scuba dive certification) costs \$495 and can be completed within your own time frame (minimum three days); Advanced and Rescue are also available, and you can even complete your DiveMaster training, getting you on the road to working in the dive industry.

FAMILY OPTIONS *Kids' Sea Camp, 18-25 June 2016*
Manta Ray Bay Resort has put together a summer dive and culture package for divers and non-divers, catering to family members of all ages. Parents dive with adults in the morning while kids do junior dives in concert with PADI Seal Team and SASY (snorkelling) activities. Afternoons involve family dives for both parents and kids. (All these activities can also be arranged outside the scheduled camp in June.) Childcare is provided if your young ones don't dive or if you need some relaxation time. The resort's double suites sleep up to six people; extra beds are available. 

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- Rescue | 2735 3355

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Department of Health | 2961 8989

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24hr China Light & Power Co Ltd (NT & outlying islands)
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HK OBSERVATORY

hko.gov.hk

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- Around DB Magazine | arounddb.com
- The Australian Association | 2530 4461 | ozhongkong.com
- Community Advice Bureau (CAB) | 2815 5444 | cab.org.hk
- Christina Noble Children's Foundation (CNCF) | 2832 2186 | cnfc.org.hk
- Crossroads International | 2984 9309 | crossroads.org.hk
- DB Living | db-living.com
- Dyslexia Association Hong Kong | 2872 5489 | dyslexia.org.hk
- Life On Lantau Magazine | lifeonlantau.com
- The Friends of the Art Museum (The Chinese University of Hong Kong) cuhk.edu.hk/ics/friends/
- Hong Kong Dog Rescue | 9448 1128 | hongkongdogrescue.com
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- Southside Magazine | southside.hk
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Legend: (*) IFC - Inside Front Cover IBC - Inside Back Cover OBC - Outside Back Cover (^) Also has leasing options



By Jeanne Mack

THE TRIPADVISOR EFFECT

This summer, we embarked on a fairly complicated vacation that involved stays at six hotels, flights on three airlines, four train journeys, and meals in many different restaurants. I feel like a bad hotel or a disappointing meal is such a waste on a holiday, so I'm constantly striving to have the best experience possible.

While planning this trip, I turned to TripAdvisor for the insight and experience offered by fellow travellers. For the most part, I find these reviews reliable. However, we've had one disastrous holiday that has made us wary. I booked a resort in Phuket based on overwhelmingly positive reviews of the place as "family-friendly", only to discover that all the reviewers were into package resorts with vast buffets and endless activities, with staff of every nationality so you easily forget where in the world you actually are. It wasn't our sort of place at all, and now I take all reviews with a grain of salt. TripAdvisor might take the guesswork out of booking a place, but it's not without its downsides.

After our Phuket experience, I've developed a process that requires reading all reviews and eliminating any that include the words "romantic", "tranquil" and "remote". I also pay attention to where other reviewers are coming from. Retiree "Bob from Brisbane" and the cute couple from Korea are likely to have very

different views on what makes a good hotel experience to our little family of four from Hong Kong...

Planning our summer holiday literally took days – at times I was paralysed by the number of choices available, and any negative reviews threw me completely. In the end, I spent so long agonising over it all that in some cases I was left with fewer options and had to book whatever was available!

This holiday we spent a lot of time traipsing about cities, smartphones in hand, desperately trying to find the best places for lunch or dinner. Gone are the days when we would take a chance on a back-alley trattoria or a street vendor selling kebabs out of his living room; and it's a shame, because in the past they were usually the best meals of the whole trip.

Another side effect of the success of sites like TripAdvisor is just how alluring that little logo can be. Many places that we went to based on high ratings were filled with tourists just like us – waiters spoke to us in English, and menus consisted of Western food to cater to foreign tastes, and were offered in four different languages.

By the end, we found ourselves craving a more authentic experience, so we started befriending locals on the street and seeking out the spots where they liked to eat. Of course, these were the aforementioned back-alley trattorias where the specials of the day have

ingredients you can't pronounce and the flavours are unlike anything you've ever eaten before. There's a lot to be said for taking chances.

Since we've been home, we've been inundated with requests from hotels to fill in surveys or review them on one site or another. I'm also an avid contributor to TripAdvisor and I think it can be a great way to give feedback. But in future, I'm going to keep a few places to myself. Some of these were so special that I don't want every tourist to know about them, so I'll give my feedback the old-fashioned way: with a very generous tip and a return visit next year! □

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